138.

THE

Last Work

OF A

BELIEVER.

His Passing-Prayer, recommending his departing Spirit to Christ to be Received by him.

Prepared for the Funerals of *Mary* the Widow first of *Francis Charlton* Esq; and after of *Thomas Hanmer* Esq;: And partly Preached at St. *Mary Magdalens* Church in *Milk-street*, *London*, And now, at the desire of her Daughter, before her Death, reprinted. *she died 1662.*

By *Richard Baxter.*

Joh. 12. 26. *If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my Servant be: and if any man serve me, him will my Father Honour.*

LONDON:

Printed by *B. Griffin*, for *B. Simmons* at the three Golden *Cocks*, at the West-end of St. *Pauls*. 1682.

265

BRITISH

The Contents of the last work of a Believer.

THE Occasion of this Discourse, page 1.
The opening of the Text, p. 3.
Doct. 1. and 2d passed by [that Christ is exalted in glory] and [is to be prayed to] p. 5.
Doct. 3. Man hath a spirit, as well as a body: And what the soul is, p. 6.
Doct. 4. The spirit of man doth survive the body: It dyeth not, nor is annihilated, nor sleepeth, p. 11.
Doct. 5. Christ doth receive the spirits of his Saints, ~~when they leave the flesh.~~ What his Receiving them is? p. 14.
Doct. 6. A dying Christian may confidently and comfortably commend his spirit to Christ to be Received by him, p. 19.
The Doctrine applyed to the unregenerate unprepared soul, p. 20.
Whom Christ will Receive, and whom he will not refuse, p. 26.
Considerations to move them to prepare so as to be Received, p. 30.
Applyed to Believers, p. 37.
Encouraging proofs of Christs receiving their departed soul, p. 39.
Other Uses of the Doctrine, p. 57.
~~For the abatement of sorrow for the Death of our departed friend,~~ p. 61.

The

The evidences of her happineſs, in the Graces in which ſhe was eminent and exemplary, p. 63.
The uſe of her example to them that ſurvive, p. 70.
Doct. 7. *Prayer in General, and this prayer in particular, That Chriſt will receive our departing ſouls, is a moſt ſuitable concluſion of all the action of a Chriſtians life,* p. 72.

TO THE
READER.

Reader,

THE *person whose Death did occasion this Discourse, was one that about five years ago removed from her antient habitation (at Appley in* Shropshire) *to* Kederminster, *where she lived under my Pastoral care till I was come up to* London: *and before she had lived there a twelvemonth (for thither she removed) she died of the Fever, then very common in the City. She lived among us an example of Prudence, Gravity, Sobriety, Righteousness, Piety, Charity and Self-denyal: and was truly what I have described her to be, and much more: For I use not to flatter the living, much less, the dead. And though I had personal acquaintance with her for no longer a time than I have mentioned, yet I think it worthy the mentioning, which I understand by comparing her last years with what is said of her former time, by those that were then neareſt to her, and so were at her Death, that whereas (as I have said) sudden Passion was the sin that she was most much to complain of, she had not contented her self with meer complainings, but so effectually resisted them, and applyed Gods remedies for the healing of her nature,*

that the ſucceſs was very much obſerved by thoſe about her, and the change and cure ſo great herein, as was a comfort to her neareſt Relations, that had the benefit of her converſe: Which I mention as a thing that ſhews us, 1. That even the Infirmities that are founded in nature and temperature of body, are curable ſo far as they fall under the dominion of a ſanctified will. 2. That even in age, when ſuch Paſſions uſually get ground, and infirmities of mind increaſe with infirmities of body, yet Grace can effectually do its work. 3. That to attend God in his Means, for the ſubduing of any corruption, is not in vain. 4. That as God hath promiſed growth of Grace, and flouriſhing in old age, ſo in his way we may expect the fulfilling of his promiſe. 5. That as Grace increaſeth, infirmities and corruptions of the Soul will vaniſh.

This makes me call to mind that ſhe was once ſo much taken with a Sermon which I preached, at the Funerals of a holy aged woman and ſo ſenſibly oft recited the Text it ſelf as much affecting her,* (2 Cor. 4. 16, 17. For which cauſe we faint not; but tho our outward man periſh, yet the inward man is renewed day by day, *&c.*) *that I am perſwaded both the Text it ſelf, and the example opened (and well known) to her did her much good.*

* Good old Mris. *Doughty*, ſometime of *Shrewsbury*, who had long walked with God, and longed to be with him; and was among us an excellent example of holineſs, blameleſneſs, contempt of the world, conſtancy, patience, humility, and (which makes it ſtrange) a great and conſtant deſire to die, though ſhe was ſtill complaining of doubtings and weakneſs of aſſurance.

Her

Her work is done: Her enemies are conquered; (*except the remaining fruits of Death upon a corrupting Body, which the Reſurrection muſt conquer*). *Her danger, and temptations, and troubles, and fears, are at an end*: *She ſhall no more be diſcomfited with evil tidings*; *nor no more partake with a militant Church in the ſorrows of her diſeaſes or diſtreſſes: We are left within the reach of Satans aſſaults and malice*; *and of the rage and violence which pride, and faction, and* Cainiſh *envy, and enmity to ſerious holineſs, do ordinarily raiſe againſt Chriſts followers in the world: We are left among the lying tongues of ſlanderous malicious men*; *and dwell in a Wilderneſs among Scorpions*; *where the* Sons of Belial, *like* Nabal, *are* ſuch that a man cannot ſpeak to them. 1 *Sam.* 25. 17. The beſt of them is as a briar; the moſt upright ſharper than a thorn hedge: *Mic.* 7. 4. (But the Sons of *Belial* ſhall be all of them as thorns thruſt away, becauſe they cannot be taken with hands, but the man that ſhall touch them muſt be fenced with iron, and the ſtaff of a ſpear, and they ſhall be utterly burnt with fire in the place, 2 *Sam.* 23. 6, 7.) *We are left among our weak, diſtempered, ſinful, afflicted, lamenting friends*; *the ſight of whoſe calamities, and participation of their ſufferings, maketh us feel the ſtroaks that fall upon ſo great a number, that we are never like to be free from pain. But ſhe is entred into the Land of* Peace, *where* Pride *and* Faction *are ſhut out*; *where Serpentine enmity, malice and fury never come: where there is no* Cain *to envy and deſtroy us*; *no Sodomites to rage againſt us*,

and

and in their blindneſs to aſſault our doors: No Ahitophels *to plot our ruin: No* Judas *to betray us: No falſe-witneſſes to accuſe us: No* Tertullus *to paint us out as peſtilent fellows and movers of ſedition among the people: No* Rehum, Shimſhai, *or their ſociety, to perſwade the Rulers that the ſervants of the God of heaven are hurtful unto Kings, and againſt their intereſt and honour,* (Ezra 4. 9, 12, 13, 14, 22. *and* 5. 11.): *No rabble to cry away with them, it is not fit that they ſhould live: No* Demas *that will forſake us for the love of preſent things: No ſuch contentious cenſorious friends as* Jobs *to afflict us, by adding to our affliction: No curſed* Cham *to diſhonour parents: No ambitious rebellious* Abſolom *to moleſt us, or to lament: No ſinful, ſcandalous, or impatient friends to be our grief: And which is more than all, no earthly, ſinful inclinations in our ſelves; no paſſions or infirmities; no languiſhings of ſoul, no deadneſs, dulneſs, hard heartedneſs, or weakneſſes of grace, no backwardneſs to God, or eſtrangedneſs from him, nor fears or doubtings of his love, nor frowns of his diſpleaſure: None of theſe do enter into that ſerene and holy region, nor ever interrupt the joy of Saints.*

The great work is yet upon our hands, to fight out the good fight, to finiſh our courſe, to run with patience the remainder of the race that is before us: And as we muſt look to Jeſus the Author and Finiſher of our faith, as our great exemplar, ſo muſt we look to his Saints and Martyrs as our encouraging examples under him. Put the caſe you were now dying, (and O how near is it, and how ſure!) What would you need

moſt

most if the day were come? That is it that you need most now: Look after it speedily while you have time! Look after it seriously, if you have the hearts of men, and sin have not turned you into Idiots or blocks. What a disgrace is it to mankind, to hear men commonly at death cry out, O for a little more time, and O for the opportunities of grace again! and O how shall I enter upon eternity thus unprepared!] *As if they had never heard or known that they must die till now! Had you not a lifes time to put these questions? and should you not long ago have got them satisfactorily resolved? And justly doth God give over some to that greater shame of humane nature, as not to be called to their wits even by the approach of death it self, but as they contemned everlasting Life in their health, God justly leaveth them to be so sottish, as to venture presumptuously with unrenewed souls upon death, and the conceit that they are of the right Church, or party, or opinion; or that the Priest hath absolved them, doth pass with them for the necessary preparation; and well were it for them, if these would pass them currantly into heaven: But O what heart can now conceive, how terrible it is, for a new departed soul to find it self remedilesly disappointed, and to be shut up in flames and desperation, before they would believe that they were in danger of it?*

Reader, I beseech thee, as ever thou believest that thou must shortly die, retire from the crowd and noise of worldly vanity and vexation: O Lethink thee how little a while thou must be here, and have use for honour, and favour, and wealth; and what it is for a soul to pass into heaven or hell, and to dwell among Angels or Devils for ever; And how men should live, and

watch, and pray, that are near to such a change as this. Should I care what men call me (by tongue or pen)? Should I care whether I Live at liberty or in prison, when I am ready to die, and have matters of infinite moment before me, to take me up? Honour or dishonour, liberty or prison, are words of no sound or signification scarce to be heard or taken notice of, to one of us that are just passing to God and to everlasting life! The Lord have mercy upon the distracted world! how strangely doth the Devil befool them in the daylight, and make them needlesly trouble themselves about many things, when one thing is needful; and Heaven is talk'd of (and that but heartlesly and seldom) while fleshly provision only is the prize, the pleasure, the business of their lives! Some are diverted from their serious preparation for death, by the beastly avocations of lust and gawdiness, and meats, and drinks, and childish sports: and some by the businesses of ambition and covetousness, contriving how to feather their nests, and exercise their Wills over others in the world! and some that will seem to be doing the work, are diverted as dangerously as others, by contending about formalities and Ceremonies, and destroying Charity and Peace, rending the Church, and strengthening factions, and carrying on Interests hypocritically under the name of Religion, till the Zeal that Saint James describeth, (Jam. 3. 13, 14, &c.) having consumed all that was like to the Zeal of Love and Holiness in themselves, proceed to consume the Servants and interest of Christ about them and to bite and devoure, till their Lord come and find them in a day that they looked not for him, smiting their fellow-servants, and eating and

and drinking with the drunken, and cut them asunder, and appoint them their portion with the hypocrites, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, Matth. 24. 49, 50, 51.

O study, and preach, and hear, and pray, and live, and use your brethren that differ from you in some opinions, as you would do if you were going to receive your doom, and as will then be most acceptable to your Lord! The guilt of sensuality, worldiness, ambition, of uncharitableness, cruelty and injustice, of losing time, and betraying your souls by negligence, or perfidiousness and wilful sin, will lie heavyer upon a departing Soul, then now in the drunkenness of prosperity you can think: Christ will never receive such Souls in their extremity, unless upon repentance by faith in his blood, they are washed from this pollution. It is unspeakably terrible to die, without a confidence that Christ will receive us: And little knows the graceless world what sincerity and simplicity in holiness is necessary to the soundness of such a confidence.

Let those that know not that they must die, or know of no life hereafter, hold on their chase of a feather, till they find what they lost their lives, and Souls, and labour for: But if thou be a Christian, remember what is thy work! Thou wilt not need the favour of man, nor worldly wealth to prevail with Christ to Receive thy spirit: O learn thy Last Work, *before thou art put upon the doing of it. The world of spirits to which we are passing, doth better know then*

this world of fleshly darkened sinners, the great difference between the Death of a Heavenly Believer, and of an earthly sensualist. Believe it, it is a thing possible to get that apprehension of the Love of Christ, that confidence of his Receiving us, and such familiar pleasant thoughts of our entertainment by him, as shall much overcome the fears of Death, and make it a welcome day to us when we shall be admitted into the Celestial society. And the difference between one mans Death and anothers, dependeth on the difference between Heart and Heart, Life and Life, Preparation and Unpreparedness.

If you ask me, How may so happy a Preparation be made? I have told you in this following Discourse, and more fully else where formerly. I shall add now these few Directions following.

1. Follow the flattering world no further: *Come off from all expectation of felicity below:* Enjoy nothing under the Sun; *but only use it in order to your enjoyment of the real pure delight: Take heed of being* too much pleased *in the creature. Have you houses, and lands, and offices, and honours, and friends that are very pleasing to you? Take heed; for that is the killing snare! Shut your eyes, and wink them all into nothing; and cast by your contrivances, and cares, and fears, and remember you have another work to do.*

2. *Live in Communion with a suffering Christ:*

study

ſtudy well the whole life and nature of his ſufferings; and the reaſon of them; and think how deſirable it is to be conformed to him: Thus look to Jeſus, that for the joy that was ſet before him, deſpiſed the ſhame, and endured the Croſs, and the contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf. Dwell upon this example that the image of a humbled ſuffering Chriſt being deeply imprinted on thy mind, may draw thy heart into a juſter reliſh of a mortified ſtate: Sure he is no good Chriſtian that thinks it not better to live as Chriſt did (in holy poverty and ſufferings in the world) then as Croeſus *or* Cæſar, *or any ſuch worldling and ſelf-pleaſure lived.* Die daily, *by following Jeſus with your* Croſs, *and when* you have a while ſuffered with him, *he will* make you perfect, and receive your ſpirits, *and you* ſhall reign with him: *It wonderfully prepareth for a comfortable Death, to live in the* fellowſhip of the ſufferings of Chriſt: *He is moſt likely to die quietly, patiently and joyfully, that can firſt be poor, be neglected, be ſcorned, be wronged, be ſlandered, be impriſoned, quietly, patiently and joyfully. If you were but at* Hieruſalem, *you would with ſome love and pleaſure go up* Mount Olivet, *and think,* [Chriſt went this very way] *You would Love to ſee the place where he was born, the way which he went when he carryed his Croſs, the holy grave where he was buried, (where there is a Temple which Pilgrims uſe to viſit:, from whence they uſe to bring the* mark *as a pleaſing badge of honour.) But how much* more of Chriſt

is there in our ſuffering for his Cauſe and Truth? *and in following him in a mortified ſelf-denying life, then in following him in the path that he hath trodden upon earth? His enemies ſaw his Croſs, his Grave, his Mother, his perſon: This did not heal their ſinful Souls and make them happy. But the Croſs that he calleth us to bear, is,* a life of ſuffeing for Righteouſneſs ſake, *in which he commandeth us to* rejoyce *and* be exceeding glad, becauſe our Reward is great in Heaven, *though* all manner of evil be ſpoken of us falſly *by men on earth*, Mat. 5. 11, 12. *This is called a* being pertakers of Chriſts ſufferings, *in which we are commanded* to rejoyce; that when this glory ſhall be revealed, we may be glad with exceeding joy, 1 *Pet.* 4. 13. *And as* the ſufferings of Chriſt abound towards us, ſo will our Conſolation abound by Chriſt; 1 *Cor.* 1. 5. *Till we come up to a life of willing* mortification, *and* pleaſed contented ſuffering with Chriſt, *we are in the* lower form *of his School, and as* Children, *ſhall tremble at that which ſhould not cauſe our terrour, and through miſapprehenſions of the caſe of a* departing ſoul, *ſhall be* afraid *of that which ſhould be our* joy. *I am not* ſuch *an enemy to the eſteem of* relicks, *but if one could ſhew me the very* ſtocks *that* Paul *and* Silas *ſate in when they ſung* Pſalms *in their impriſonment*, Acts 16. *I could be contented to be put (for the like cauſe) into the ſame ſtocks, with a ſpecial willingneſs and pleaſure: How much more ſhould we be willing to be* conformed

to

to our ſuffering Lord, *in a* Spirit *and* life *of true* mortification?

3. Hold Communion alſo with his ſuffering Members: *Deſire not to dwell in the* tents of wickedneſs, *nor to be planted among them that* flouriſh for a time, that they may be deſtroyed for ever, Pſal. 92. 6, 7. *I had rather have* Bradford's heart *and* faggot, *than* Bonners Biſhoprick. *It was* holy Stephen, *and not thoſe that* ſtoned him, *that* ſaw Heaven opened, *and the* Son of Man ſitting at the right hand of God, Acts 7.56. *and that could joyfully ſay*, Lord Jeſus Receive my Spirit. *He* liveth not *by* Faith (*though he may be a hanger on that keepeth up ſome profeſſion for fear of being damned*) *who* chooſeth *not* rather to ſuffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon, and eſteemeth not the very reproach of Chriſt greater riches than the treaſures of the world, as having reſpect to the recompence of reward, *Heb.* 11. 25. 26.

4. Live as if Heaven were open to your ſight: *and then dote upon the delights of worldlings if you can: Then love a life of fleſhly eaſe and honour better than to be with Chriſt, if you can.* But *of this I have ſpoken at large in other writings.*

Chriſtian, make it the ſtudy and buſineſs of thy Life, to learn to do thy Laſt Work *well*; *that* Work *which muſt be done but* once; *that ſo* Death *which tranſmits* unholy Souls *into utter darkneſs and deſpair, may deliver thy* Spirit *into thy* Redeemers

deemers hands *to be* Received to his Glory; *according to that blessed promise*, John 12. 26. *And while I am in the flesh, beg the same mercy for*

London, Jan. 31. 166½.

Thy Brother and Companion in tribulation, and in the Kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.

Richard Baxter.

A

BELIEVERS Laſt Work.

ACTS 7. 59.

Lord Jeſus, receive my Spirit.

THE *Birth* of Nature, and the *New Birth* of *Grace*, in their meaſure reſemble the *Death* of *Saints*, which is the *Birth* of *Glory*. It is a bitter-ſweet day, a day that is mixt of ſorrow and joy, when Nature muſt quit its familiar Gueſt, and yield to any of theſe Changes. Our *Natural Birth* is not without the throws and pain, and groanings of the Mother, though it tranſmit the Child into a more large, and lightſom, and deſirable Habitation: Our *Spiritual Birth* is not without its humbling and heart-piercing ſorrows: and when we are *brought out of darkneſs into the marvellous light*, we leave our old Companions, in diſpleaſure, whom we forſake, and our Fleſh re-

pining at the loſs of its ſenſual delights: And our *paſſage into Glory* is not without thoſe pangs and fears which muſt needs be the attendants of a pained Body, ready to be diſſolved, and a Soul that is going through ſo ſtrait a door, into a ſtrange though a moſt bleſſed place; And it leaveth our lamenting Friends behind, that feel their loſs, and would longer have enjoyed our Company, and *ſee not* (though they *believe*) the Glory of the departed Soul. And this is our caſe, that are brought hither this day, by an act of Providence ſad to us, though joyous to our departed Friend; by a Voice that hath called her into Glory, and called us into this Mourning plight: Even us that rejoyce in the thoughts of her Felicity, and are not ſo cruel as to wiſh her again into this corruptible Fleſh and calamitous World, from the glorious preſence of the Lord; and yet ſhould have kept her longer from it, for our own and others ſakes, if our Wiſdom had been fit to rule, or our Wills to be fulfilled, or if our Prayers muſt have been anſwered, according to the meaſure of our failing Apprehenſions, or precipitant Deſires. But Folly muſt ſubmit to the Incomprehenſible Wiſdom; and the Deſire of the Creature muſt ſtoop to the Will of the Creator: The *Intereſt of Chriſt* muſt be *preferred*, when he calleth for his own; and *our* temporary Intereſt muſt give place: Fleſh muſt be ſilent, and not contend; and Duſt muſt not dare to queſtion God: He knoweth beſt when his Fruit is ripe; and though he will allow our moderate Sorrows, he will not ſo much damnifie his Saints, as to detain

tain them with us from their Joyful Rest, till we are content to let them go.

Thus also did Blessed *Stephen* depart from Glory to Glory; from a *distant sight* of the Glory of God, and of *Jesus* standing at his right hand, into the *immediate presence* and *fruition* of that Glory: But yet he must pass the *narrow Port*; enraged Malice must stone him till he die; and he must undergo the Pains of Martyrdom, before he reach to the Glory which he had seen: And when he was arrived in safety, he leaveth his Brethren scattered in the Storm, and *Devout men make great lamentation at his burial*, *Acts* 9. 2. Though it is probable by the ordinary acceptation of the Word [ἄνδρες εὐλαβεῖς] that they were not *professed Christians*, but *devout Proselytes*, (such as *Cornelius* and the *Ethiopian* Eunuch were) that buried and thus lamented *Stephen*, as knowing him to be an *excellent Person*, cruelly murdered by the raging *Jews*; yet *their Example*, in a Case not culpable, but commendable, may be imitated by *Believers*; upon condition that, with our sense of the *Excellency of the Persons*, and of *our loss* by their removal, we exceed them that had but a darker Revelation, in our *joyful sense* of the *felicity* of the *translated Souls*.

The occasion of the Death of this Holy Man, was partly that he *surpassed others*, as being *full of Faith, and of the Holy Ghost*; and partly, that he *plainly rebuked* the blind and furious *persecuting Zeal* of the *Jews*, and bore a most resolute Testimony of Christ. It is an *ill time* when Men must

suffer becauſe they are *good*, and *deſerve not ſuffering*, but *reward*: And they are an unhappy People that have no more Grace or Wit, but to fight againſt Heaven, and ſet themſelves under the Strokes of God's ſevereſt Juſtice, by perſecuting them that are dear to Chriſt, and faithfully perform their Duty. It is no ſtrange thing for the ZEAL and INTEREST of a FACTION to make Men *mad*; ſo mad, as implacably to rage againſt the Off ſpring of Heaven, and to hate Men becauſe they are *faithful* to their *great Maſter*, and becauſe they are againſt *their Faction*; ſo mad, as to think that the *Intereſt* of their *Cauſe requireth* them to deſtroy the *beſt* with the *greateſt malice*, becauſe they ſtand moſt in their way; and to forget that Chriſt, the Revenger of his Elect, doth take all as done to *him* that is done to *them*; ſo mad, as to forget all the terrible Threatnings of God, and terrible Inſtances of his avenging Juſtice, againſt the Enemies of his Servants, whom he taketh as his own; and to ruine their own Reputations, by ſeeking to defame the Upright, whoſe Names God is engaged to honour, and whoſe Righteouſneſs ſhall ſhine forth as the Sun, when fooliſh Malignity hath done its worſt. When Chriſt had pleaded his Cauſe effectually with *Saul*, that was one of the Perſecutors of *Stephen*, he maketh him confeſs that he was [περισσῶς ἐμμαινόμενος] *exceedingly, exceſſively*, or *beyond meaſure mad* againſt the *Chriſtians*.

But this Bleſſed Protomartyr, in deſpite of Malice, doth ſafely and joyfully paſs through all their

Rage

Rage to Heaven: By *killing* him they make him *more than Conquerour*, and send him to receive his Crown: And he shuts up all the Action of his Life, in imitation of his suffering Lord, with a two-fold Request to Heaven; the one for *himself*, that his *Spirit may be received*; the other for his *Persecutors*, that *this sin may not be laid to their charge*, *Acts* 7. 59, 60. For so you may find Christ did before him, *Luke* 23. 34. 46. [*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*] and, [*Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit.*] Only *Christ* directeth *his* Prayer *immediately* to the *Father*, and *Stephen* to *Christ*, as being one that had a *Mediator*, when *Christ* had *none*, as *needing none*; and being now bearing witness by his suffering, to *Christ*, and therefore it was seasonable to direct his Prayer to him; but especially because it was an *Act* of *Mediation* that he petitioneth for, and therefore directeth his Petition to the *Mediator*.

This first Request of this dying Saint, which I have chosen to handle, as suitable and seasonable for our Instruction at this time, in a few Words containeth not a few exceeding useful wholesom Truths.

As, 1. It is here plainly intimated, that [*Jesus Christ is exalted in Glory,*] in that he hath power to receive departed Souls,

2. *That Christ is to be prayed to,*] and that it is not our Duty to direct all our Prayers *only* to the *Father*. Especially those things that belong to the Office of the Mediator, as interceding for us in the Heavens, must be requested of the Mediator.

And

And those things which belong to the Father to give for the sake of the Mediator, must be asked of the Father for his sake. I cannot now stay to tell you in particular what belongeth to the one, and what unto the other.

3. *That Man hath a Spirit, as well as a Body*: of which, more anon.

4. *That this Spirit dieth not with the Body* (unless you will call a meer separation a *dying*.)

5. *That Christ doth receive the Spirits of his Saints, when they are separated from the Body.*

6. *That a dying Christian may confidently and comfortably commend his Spirit to Christ, to be received of him.*

7. *That Prayer in general, and this Prayer in special,* That Christ will receive our departing Souls, *is a most suitable Conclusion of all the Actions of a Christian's Life.*

THe *first* and *second* of these Doctrines, offered us by this Text, I shall pass by.

The *third* is not questioned by any that knoweth himself to be a Man: But that we may *understand* it and the rest, we must consider what the Word [*Spirit*] doth here signifie. By [*Spirit*] here can be meant nothing but the *Rational Soul*, which is the principal *constitutive part* of the *man*. For, though the word do sometime signifie the *Wind* or *Breath*, and sometime the *moral* and *intellectual Qualifications*, and have divers other senses, I need not stay to prove that it is not here so taken: Ste-

phen

then prayeth not to Christ to receive his *Breath*, his *Graces*, or *the Holy Ghost*; but to receive his *Rational immortal Soul*.

It is not only the *Soul*, but *God himself*, that is called [*a Spirit*]: And though the Name be fetch'd from lower things, that is because that as we have no adequate positive *conception* of God or Spirits, so we can have no adequate proper *names* for them, but must take up with *borrowed* Names, as answerable to our *Notions*.

Sometime the Word *Spirit* (as *Heb.* 4. 12. &c.) is distinguished from the *Soul*: And then it either signifieth the *superior Faculties* in the same Soul, or the same Soul as *elevated by Grace*.

Do you ask, *What the Soul is?* You may also ask, *What a Man is*. And it is pity that a *Man* should not know *what a Man is*. It is our *Intellectual Nature*, containing also the *Sensitive* and *Vegetative*: The *Principle or first Act, by which we live, and feel, and understand, and freely will*. The *Acts* tell you what the *Faculties* or *Powers* are, and so what the *Soul is*. If you know what *Intellection*, or *Reason* and *Free-will* are, you may know what it is to have a *spiritual Nature, essentially containing the Power of Reasoning* and *Willing*. It is thy *Soul* by which thou art *thinking* and *asking, What a Soul is!* And as he that *reasoneth* to prove that *Man* hath *no Reason*, doth prove that he *hath Reason* by *reasoning* against it; so he that *reasoneth* to prove that he hath *no Soul*, doth thereby prove that he hath a *Reasonable* (though abused) *Soul*.

Yet

Yet there are some so blind as to question, *Whether they have Souls*, because they *see them not*. Whereas if they could *see them* with Eyes of Flesh, they were *no Souls*: For *Spirits* are *invisible*. They *see not* the *Air* or *Wind*, and yet they know that *Air* or *Wind* there is. They see not *God* or *Angels*, and yet they are Fools indeed if they doubt whether there be a *God* and *Angels*. If they *see not* their *Eyes*, yet they *know* that they have *Eyes*, because *with those Eyes* they *see other things*. And if they know not *directly* and *intuitively* that they have *Rational Souls*, they might *know* it by their *knowing* other things, which without such *Souls* cannot be known. It is just with God, that those that live as carnally, and brutishly, and negligently, as if they *had no Souls* to use or care for, should at last be given up to question whether they *have Souls*, or *no*.

O woful Fall! depraved Nature! O miserable Men, that have so far departed from God, as to deny both *themselves and God!* or to question Whether *God be God*, and *Man be Man!* Return to *God*, and thou wilt come to thy *self*: Forget not, Man, thy Noble Nature, thy chiefest Part: Think not that thou art *only Shell*, because thou *seest not through the Shell*. It is *Souls* that converse *by the Bodies* while they are in Flesh. It is *thy Soul* that I am speaking to, and *thy Soul* that understandeth me: When *thy Soul* is gone, I will speak to thee no more. It is thy Soul that is the Workmanship of God by an *immediate* or *special* way of Fabrication, *Isa.* 57. 16. *The Souls that I have made.*

Gen.

Gen. 2. 7. *He breathed into man the breath of life, and he became a living soul.*] It is thy *Soul* that is said to be *made after God's Image*; in that thou art ennobled with a capacious *Understanding*, and *Free-will*: And it is thy *Soul* that is the immediate subject of his *Moral Image*, even *spiritual Wisdom*, *Righteousness*, and *Holiness*: God hath not *Hands*, and *Feet*, and other Members, as thy *Body* hath. How noble a Nature is that which is capable of *knowing* not only all things in the World (in its measure) but *God himself*, and the things of the *world* that is to *come*; and capable of *loving* and *enjoying God*, and of *seeking* and *serving* him in order to that *Enjoyment*! *Christ* thought not basely of a Soul, that *redeemed* Souls at *such a price*, when he *made his soul an offering for sin*, *Isa.* 53. 10. Were it not for our *immortal Souls*, would God ever honour us with such *Relations* to him, as to be *his Children*? (*For he is first the Father of Spirits*, *Heb.* 12. 9. and then the *Father of Saints*.) Should we be called the *Spouse* and the *Members* of Christ? Would he be at *so much cost* upon us? Should *Angels* attend us *as ministring Spirits*, if we *had not Spirits* fit to minister to *God*? Would the *Spirit of God* himself dwell in us, and quicken and beautifie us with his Grace? Should a world of Creatures (whose Corporeal Substance seems as excellent as ours) attend and serve us, if we were but an ingenuous sort of Brutes, and had not *rational immortal Souls*? Should such store of *Mercies* be provided for us? Should *Ministers* be appointed to *preach*, and *pray*, and *labour* for us, if we had

not *Souls* to *save* or *lose*? *They watch for your souls as those that must give account*, *Heb.* 13. 17. Why should they *preach in season and out of season*, and suffer so much to perform their Work, but that they know that [*He that winneth souls is wise*,] *Prov.* 11. 30. and that [*he which converteth a sinner from the errour of his way, doth save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins*,] *Jam.* 6. 20. The *Devil* himself may tell you the worth of Souls, when he *compasseth the earth* (Job 1. 7.) and *goeth about night and day to deceive them and devour them*, 1 *Pet.* 5. 8. And yet can he make *you* believe that they are so *worthless*, as to be abused to the *basest drudgery*, to be poysoned with Sin and Sensuality, to be ventured for a thing of naught.

O, Sirs, have you such immortal Souls, and will you sell them for a *Lust*, for a *beastly Pleasure*, for liberty to glut your Flesh, or for the Price that *Judas* sold his Lord for? Is thy Soul no more worth than Honour, or Wealth, or foolish Mirth? Is thy Soul so base, as not to be worth the care and labour of a Holy Life? Is the *World* worth all thy Care and Labour, and shall less be called *too much ado*, when it is for thy precious Soul? Alas! one would think by the careless fleshly Lives of many, that they remember not that they *have* Souls. Have they not need in the depth of their Security, in the height of their Ambition, and in the heat of Fleshly Lusts, to have a Monitor to call to them, *Remember that thou art a man, and that thou hast a Soul to save or lose.* What thinkest thou of thy negligence and carnal Life, when thou rea-

dest

deſt that ſo holy a Man as *Paul* muſt *keep under his body, and bring it into ſubjection, leſt he ſhould be a caſt-away* after all his Labours! 1 Cor. 9. 25, 26, 27. O live not as if the *Fleſh* were the *Man*, and its Pleaſure your Felicity; but live as thoſe that have Spirits to take care for.

DOCT. 4

THe *ſpirit of man doth ſurvive the Body. It dyeth not* with it: It is *not annihilated*: It is *not reſolved* into the eſſence of ſome common element of ſouls, where it loſeth its ſpecifick form and name: It was ſtill *the Spirit of Stephen* that *was received by Chriſt*. It *ſleepeth not*: To confute the dream of thoſe that talk of the *ſleeping of Souls*, or any Lethargich, unintelligent or unactive ſtate, of ſo excellent, capacious and active a nature, were but to diſpute with ſleeping men. When we ſay it is *Immortal*, we mean not that it or any creature hath in it ſelf a *ſelf-ſupporting* or *ſelf-preſerving ſufficiency*; or that they are *Neceſſary Beings*, and not *Contingent*; or *Primitive Beings*, and not *Derived* from another by *Creation*: We know that all the world would turn to nothing in a moment, if God did but withdraw his preſerving and upholding influence, and but *ſuſpend* that *Will* that doth continue them: He need not exert any *Poſitive Will* or *Act* for their deſtruction or annihilation. Though *ejusdem eſt annihilare, cujus eſt creare*; none can annihilate but God, yet it is by

a *Positive efficient* act of Will that he *createth*; and by a meer *cessation* of the act of his preserving Will, he can *annihilate*. I mean not by any change in him; but by *willing* the continuance of the creature *but till* such a period. But yet he that will perpetuate the *Spirit of Man*, hath given it a *nature* (as he hath done the *Angels*) *fit* to be *perpetuated*: A *Nature* not guilty of composition and elementary materiallity which might subject it to corruption: so that as there is an *Aptitude* in *Iron*, or *Silver*, or *Gold*, to continue longer than *Grass*, or *Flowers*, or *Flesh*; and a reason of its duration may be given *a natura rei*, from that *aptitude* in subordination to the Will of God; so there is such an *Aptitude* in the *Nature* of the *Soul* to be *Immortal*, which God maketh use of to the accomplishment of his will for its *actual perpetuity*.

The *Heathenish Socinians* that deny the *Immortality* of the Soul, (yea worse than Heathenish, for most Heathens do maintain it) must deny it to *Christ himself*, as well as to his *Members*: For he used the like recommendation of his Soul to his *Father*, when he was on the Cross, as *Stephen* doth here to *him*. If [*Lord Jesus receive my Spirit*] be words that prove not the surviving of the *Spirit of Stephen*; then [*Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit*] will not prove the surviving of the *Spirit of Christ*: And then what do these infidels make of *Christ*, who also deny his *Deity*; and consequently make him *nothing* but a *Corpse*, when his body was in the grave! How then did he make good his promise to the penitent malefactor, [*This*

day

day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.] But he that said, [*Because I live, ye shall live also*] John 14. 19. did *live in the Spirit*, while he was *put to death in the flesh*, 1 Pet. 3. 18. *and receiveth the Spirits* of his Servants unto *life eternal*, while their flesh is *rotting* in the grave: This very Text is so clear for this, if there were no other, it might end the controversie with all that believe the Holy Scriptures.

I confess there *is a sleep of Souls*: A *Metaphorical sleep* in sin and in security: Or else the drowsie opinions of these Infidels, had never found entertainment in the world: A sleep so deep, that the voice of God in the threatnings of his Word, and the alarm of his Judgments, and the thunder of his warnings by his most serious Ministers, prevail not to awaken the most. So dead a sleep possesseth the most of the ungodly world, that they can quietly sin in the sight of God, at the entrance upon eternity, at the doors of Hell, and the calls of God do not awaken them: So *dead a sleep* that Scripture justly calls them *dead*, *Eph.* 2. 1. 5. And *Ministers* may well call them *dead*; For alas it is not *our voice* that can awake them. They are *as dead to us*; we draw back the curtains to let in the light, and shew them that Judgment is at hand, and use those true but terrible arguments from wrath and hell, which we are afraid should too much frighten many tender hearers: and yet *they sleep on*, and our loudest calls, our tears and our intreaties cannot awaken them. We cry to them in the name of the Lord, [*Awake thou*

thou that ſleepeſt, ariſe from the dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee light] Eph. 5. 14. This *Moral ſleep* and *death* of *Souls*, which is the fore-runner of *everlaſting death* in *miſery*, we cannot deny. But *after Death* even *this ſleep* ſhall ceaſe; and God will awaken them with his *vengeance*, that would not be awaked by his *Grace*. Then ſinner, ſleep under the thoughts of ſin and Gods diſpleaſure if thou canſt: There is no ſleeping Soul in *Hell*: There are none that are *paſt feeling*. The mortal ſtroke that layeth thy fleſh to ſleep in the duſt, lets out the guilty Soul into a *World* where there is *no ſleeping*; where there is a Light irreſiſtible, and a Terrour and Torment that will keep them waking. If God *bid* thee awake by the *flames of Juſtice*, he will have no nay. The *firſt ſight* and *feeling* which will ſurprize thee when thou haſt left *this Fleſh*, will awake thee to Eternity, and do more than *we* could do in Time, and convince thee that there is no ſleeping ſtate for ſeparated Souls.

DOCT. 5.

CHriſt doth receive the Spirits of his Saints when they leave the Fleſh.

Here we ſhall firſt tell you what *Chriſts receiving of the Spirit is.* The Word ſignifieth to *take it as acceptable to himſelf*; and it comprehendeth theſe Particulars.

1. That Chriſt will *not leave* the new-departed Soul to the *will of Satan* its malicious Enemy.

How

How ready is *he* to receive us to *perdition*, if *Christ refuse us*, and receive us not to *Salvation*? He that now *seeketh as a roaring Lion night and day*, as our *adversary*, to *devour* us by *deceit*, will then seek to devour us by *execution*. How glad was he when God gave him leave but to touch the *goods*, and *children*, and *body* of *Job*? And how much more would it please his enmity, to have power to torment our Souls? But the Soul that *fled* to the arms of Christ by Faith in the day of *tryal*, shall then *find it self* in the *arms of Christ* in the moment of its entrance upon Eternity. O Christian, whether thou *now* feel it to thy comfort or not, thou shalt *then* feel it to the ravishing of thy Soul, that thou didst not fly to Christ in vain, nor trust him in vain to be thy Saviour: Satan shall be forever disappointed of his desired Prey. Long wast thou combating with him; frequently and strongly wast thou tempted by him: Thou oft thoughtest it was a doubtful Question who should win the day, and whether ever thou shouldest hold out and be saved: But when thou passest from the Flesh, in thy last Extremity, in the end of thy greatest and most shaking Fears; when Satan is ready, if he might, to carry thy Soul to Hell; *then*, even *then* shalt thou find that thou hast won the day. And yet not *thou*, but *Christ* is he that hath been victorious for thee (even as when thou livedst the life of *Faith*, it was not *thou*, but *Christ lived in thee*, *Gal.* 2. 20.) Thou mayst *fear* at thy departure, and leave the Flesh with terrour, and imagine that Satan will presently devour thee: But

the *experience* of a *moment* will end thy Fears, and thou ſhalt triumph againſt thy conquered Foe. He that ſaved thee from the dominion of a *tempting Devil*, will certainly ſave thee from him when he would *torment* thee. Here he would *have us that, he may ſift us*, and get advantage on our weakneſs; but Chriſt prayeth for us, and ſtrengthneth us, that our *faith may not fail*, *Luke* 22. 31. And he that ſaveth us from the ſin, will ſave us from the puniſhment; and from Satans *fury*, as he did from his *fraud*.

2. Chriſts *Receiving* us, doth include his *favourable entertainment and welcoming the departed Soul*. Poor Soul, thou waſt never ſo welcome to thy deareſt Friend, nor into the arms of a Father, a Husband, or a Wife, as thou ſhalt be then into the preſence and embracements of thy Lord. Thou *heareſt*, and *readeſt*, and *partly believeſt* now how he loveth us, even as his Spouſe and Members, as his Fleſh and Bone, *Eph.* 6. But then thou ſhalt *feel* how he *loveth thee* in particular: If the Angels of God have joy at thy *Converſion*, what joy will there be in *Heaven* at thy *enterance* into that *Salvation!* And ſure *thoſe Angels* will bid thee welcome, and concur with Chriſt in that triumphant joy. If a *returning Prodigal* find himſelf in the arms of his Fathers Love, and welcomed home with his kiſſes, and his robe and feaſt; What *welcome* then may a *cleanſed conquered Soul* expect, when it cometh into the preſence of *Glorious Love*, and is purpoſely to be received with *ſuch demonſtrations* of *Love*, as may be fitted to magnifie the *Love of God*, which

which exceedeth all the Love of *man*, as *Omnipotency* doth exceed *our Impotency*; and therefore will exceed it in the *effects*! Though thou haſt queſtioned *here in the dark*, whether thou wert *welcome* to Chriſt when thou cameſt to him in *prayer*, or when thou cameſt to his *holy Table*; yet *then* doubt of thy *welcom* if thou *canſt*.

O had we but one moments ſenſe of the delights of the *embraced Soul*, that is newly received by Chriſt into his Kingdom, it would make us think we were in Heaven already, and tranſport us more than the Diſciples that ſaw the Transfiguration of Chriſt; and make us ſay, in comparing this with all the Glory of the World, [*Maſter, it is good for us to be here*;] but in conſideration of the *full*, to ſay, [*It is better to be there.*] But it *muſt not* be: Earth *muſt not* be ſo happy as to have a *moments ſenſe* of the unconceivable Pleaſures of the *received Soul*; that is the *Reward* and *Crown*, and therefore not fit for us here in our Conflict.

But low things may by dark reſemblance a little help us to conceive of ſomething that is *like them* in a low degree. How would *you* receive *your Son*, or *Husband*, the next day after ſome bloody Fight, where he had eſcaped with the Victory? Or your *Child*, or *Friend*, that arrived ſafely after a long and a dangerous Voyage? Would you not run and meet him, and with joy embrace him, if he had been many years abſent, and were now come home? I tell thee, poor Soul, thy Saviour hath a *larger heart*, and another *kind* of *Love* than thou, and other Reaſons of greater force to

move him to bid thee Welcome into his Presence.

3. Christ's *Receiving the departed Soul* includeth the *State of Blessedness* into which he doth *receive* it. If you ask, *What that is?* I answer, It is *unto himself, to be with him where he is:* And that in *general* is full of comfort, if there were no more: For we know that Christ is in no ill place; He is glorified at the *right hand of the Majesty on high, Heb.* 1. 3. And that the Souls of the Righteous, and at last their Bodies, are *received to himself*, he often telleth us: *John* 12. 26. *If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be.*] *John* 14. 2, 3. *And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto my self, that where I am, there you may be also.*] And in the mean time, when we once are *absent from the body, we are present with the Lord*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 8. and that is in [*the building of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*, v. 1. *Paul* therefore desired *to depart and be with Christ, as being far better,*] *Phil.* 1. 23. And Christ promiseth the converted Thief, [*This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise,*] *Luke* 23. 43. And our State after the Resurrection hath the same description, 1 *Thess.* 4. 17. [*And so shall we ever be with the Lord:*] And what it shall be, he declareth himself, *John* 17. 24. *Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me.* The Soul of *Lazarus, Luke* 16. was *received into Abrahams bosom*, where he is said *to be comforted. The heavens receive Christ*, Acts 3. 21. and therefore

the

the heavens receive the ſpirits that go to him: even the *ſpirits of the juſt made perfect*, *Heb.* 12. 23. that is, that are crowned with Chriſt in Glory, and freed from the Imperfections and Evils of this Life. And ſo that 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 10. is plain, though ſome would pervert it, [*That whether we wake or ſleep, we may live together with him*]: Not [Whether we wake to righteouſneſs, or ſleep in ſin]; for ſuch Sleepers live not with him: Nor [whether we wake by ſollicitude, or ſleep in ſecurity]: Nor [Whether we naturally wake or ſleep] only: But whether we live, or die, and ſo our Bodies ſleep in death, yet we live together with him. In a word, Chriſt will receive us unto a *participation of his Joy and Glory*; into a *Joy* as great as our Nature ſhall be capable of, and more than we can now deſire, and that the largeſt Heart on Earth can juſtly conceive of or comprehend. And becauſe all this tells you but to the *ear*, ſtay yet but a little while, and *experimental ſight and feeling* ſhall tell you, What this *Receiving* is; even when we *receive the kingdom that cannot be moved*, *Heb.* 12. 28. and when we *receive the end of our faith, the ſalvation of our ſouls*, 1 Pet. 1. 9.

DOCT. 6.

A *Dying Chriſtian may confidently and comfortably commend his Spirit to Chriſt to be received by him.*

Though he have *formerly* been a *grievous ſinner*;

though at the *present* he be *frail* and *faulty*: though he be *weak* in *faith*, and *love*, and *duty*; though his body by sickness be become unfit to serve his Soul, and as to *present sensibility*, *activity*, or *joy*, he seem to be past the best, or to be nothing; though the Tempter would aggravate his sins, and weakness, and dulness to his discouragement; yet he *may*, he *must* with confidence recommend his Spirit to *Christ* to be *Received* by him.

O learn this Doctrine Christians, that you may *use* it in the hour of your last distress: The hour is near: the distress will be the greatest that ever you were in: As *well* as we seem now while we are hearing this, our turn is nigh: The Midwife is not so necessary to the life of the Child, that Receiveth it into the world, as *Christs Receiving* will be then to our everlasting life. To say over heartlesly these words [*Lord Jesus receive my Spirit*] will be no more than a dead hearted Hypocrite may do: such formal lip-service in life or at death, doth profit nothing to salvation; *Now* make such necessary *preparation*, that at *Death* you may have *well-grounded confidence*, that *Jesus Christ will receive your Spirits*.

1. And first, let me bring this to the *carnal unprepared sinner*.

Poor sinner, What *thoughts* hast thou of thy *dying hour*, and of thy *departing Soul!* I wonder at thee, what thoughts thou hast of them, that thou canst sin so boldly, and live so careleslly, and talk or hear of the life to come so senseleslly as thou dost! Thou mightest well think I wronged thee, if I took

thee

thee to be such a *brute* as not to know that thou *must die!* Thy *Soul* that brought thy *body hither*, that causeth it *now* to *hear* and *understand*, that carryeth it up and down the world, must very shortly be *required of thee*, and must seek another habitation. What thoughts hast thou of *thy departing Soul!* Will *Christ receive it?* Hast thou made *sure* of that? Or hast thou made it thy *principal care* and *business* to make sure! O what doth intoxicate the brains of sensual worldly men, that they drown themselves in the Cares of this Life, and ride and run for transitory Riches, and live upon the Smoak of Honour and Applause, and never soberly and seriously bethink them, whether Christ will *receive* their *departed Souls!* That they can fill their *minds* with *other thoughts*, and fill their *mouthes* with *other talk*, and consume their *time* in *other* inconsiderable *employments*; and take no more care, and spend no more thoughts, and words, and time, about the *entertainment* of their *departing Souls!* When they are *even ready* to be gone, and stand as it were on tip-toes; when *Fevers*, and *Consumptions*, and many hundred Diseases are all abroad so busily distributing their Summons; and when the Gates of Death have so many Passengers *crowding* in, and *Souls* are making such *haste away*, will you not consider what shall become of *yours?* Will you say, that you *hope well*, and you *must venture?* If God had appointed you *nothing to do*, to *prepare* for your late passage and entertainment with Christ, you might then take up with such an Answer. But it's a mad adventure to *leave all undone*

though at the *preſent* he be *frail* and *faulty*: though he be *weak* in *faith*, and *love*, and *duty*; though his body by ſickneſs be become unfit to ſerve his Soul, and as to *preſent ſenſibility*, *activity*, or *joy*, he ſeem to be paſt the beſt, or to be nothing; though the Tempter would aggravate his ſins, and weakneſs, and dulneſs to his diſcouragement; yet he *may*, he *muſt* with confidence recommend his Spirit to *Chriſt* to be *Received* by him.

O learn this Doctrine Chriſtians, that you may *uſe* it in the hour of your laſt diſtreſs: The hour is near: the diſtreſs will be the greateſt that ever you were in: As *well* as we ſeem now while we are hearing this, our turn is nigh: The Midwife is not ſo neceſſary to the life of the Child, that Receiveth it into the world, as *Chriſts Receiving* will be then to our everlaſting life. To ſay over heartleſly theſe words [*Lord Jeſus receive my Spirit*] will be no more than a dead hearted Hypocrite may do: ſuch formal lip-ſervice in life or at death, doth profit nothing to ſalvation; *Now* make ſuch neceſſary *preparation*, that at *Death* you may have *well-grounded confidence*, that *Jeſus Chriſt will receive your Spirits.*

1. And firſt, let me bring this to the *carnal unprepared ſinner.*

Poor ſinner, What *thoughts* haſt thou of thy *dying hour*, and of thy *departing Soul!* I wonder at thee, what thoughts thou haſt of them, that thou canſt ſin ſo boldly, and live ſo careleſly, and talk or hear of the life to come ſo ſenſeleſly as thou doſt! Thou mighteſt well think I wronged thee, if I took

thee

thee to be such a *brute* as not to know that thou *must die!* Thy *Soul* that brought thy *body hither*, that causeth it *now* to *hear* and *understand*, that carryeth it up and down the world, must very shortly be *required of thee*, and must seek another habitation. What thoughts hast thou of *thy departing Soul!* Will *Christ receive it?* Hast thou made *sure* of that? Or hast thou made it thy *principal care* and *business* to make sure! O what doth intoxicate the brains of sensual worldly men, that they drown themselves in the Cares of this Life, and ride and run for transitory Riches, and live upon the Smoak of Honour and Applause, and never soberly and seriously bethink them, whether Christ will *receive* their *departed Souls!* That they can fill their *minds* with *other thoughts*, and fill their *mouthes* with *other talk*, and consume their *time* in *other* inconsiderable *employments*; and take no more care, and spend no more thoughts, and words, and time, about the *entertainment* of their *departing Souls!* When they are *even ready* to be gone, and stand as it were on tip-toes; when *Fevers*, and *Consumptions*, and many hundred Diseases are all abroad so busily distributing their Summons; and when the Gates of Death have so many Passengers *crowding* in, and *Souls* are making such *haste away*, will you not consider what shall become of *yours?* Will you say, that you *hope well*, and you *must venture?* If God had appointed you *nothing to do*, to *prepare* for your late passage and entertainment with Christ, you might then take up with such an Answer. But it's a mad adventure to *leave all undone*

undone that is *necessary to your salvation*, and then to say, *You must put it to the venture*: If you die in an unrenewed and unjustified state, it is *past* all *ventures*; for it is *certain* that Christ will *not receive* you: You may talk of *hoping*, but it is *not* a *matter* to *be hoped* for. *Hope* that God will make good every *word of his Promise*, and spare not: But there is no more *Hope* that Christ will *Receive* the *souls* of *any* but of *his members*, than there is that he will *prove a lyar*. He never *promised* to save *any others*: and that is not all; but he hath declared and professed frequently that *he will not*. And you are no *Believers* if you will not *believe him*: And if you *believe him*, you must believe that the *unbelievers*, the *unregenerate*, the *unholy*, and the *workers of iniquity*, *shall not be received into the Kingdom of Heaven*: For he hath profeffed it, *John* 3.3,36. *Heb.* 12.14. *Matth.* 7.23.

If Christ would *Receive* the souls of *all*, your *venture* then had *reason* for it: Or if he had left it as a thing that depended only on his *unrevealed will*, and not on any *preparations* of *our own*, we might then have *quit our selves* of the care, and cast it all *on him*, as being *his part*, and *none of ours*: But it is *not so*: I hope I need not *tell you* that, *it is not so*: Believe it, the Question must be *Now resolved*, and *resolved by your selves*, *whether Christ shall Receive your departed souls*, or *cast them off as firebrands for Hell*? He hath *made* the *Law*, and set down the *terms already* to which he will unalterably stand, and which we must trust to. *It is now that you must labour to be accepted of him*: *For*

we

we must all appear before the Judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad,] 2 Cor. 5. 9, 10. O Sirs, this is the reason of our *importunity* with you: *Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men,* saith the Apostle in the next words, *vers.* 11. We know that the *sentence* will be *just*, and that it *is now in your own hands what judgment then shall pass upon you!* And if *just now* your souls were *passing hence*, before you went from the place you sit in, would you think any care could be too great, to make sure that they should go to happiness! O that you would consider how much it is *your own work*, and how much it resteth on *your selves* what Christ shall then do with you! *Then* you will cry to *him* for mercy, [*O cast not away a miserable soul! Lord, receive me into thy Kingdom.*] But *now* he must intreat *you* to be saved, and to *be* the people that he *may then Receive*, and you will not hear him: And if *you will not hear him*, when he calleth on you, and beseecheth you to *Repent* and to *prepare*; as sure as Christ is Christ, *he will not hear you* when you cry and call for mercy too late in your extremity. Read *Prov.* 1. and you will see this is true. It is *you* that are to be *entreated* that *Christ may receive* you; for the *unwillingness* and *backwardness* is on *your part*: *You* are now poysoning your souls by sin, and when we cannot intreat you either to *forbear* or to take the *Vomit* of *Repentance*: yet when you are gasping and dying of your own wilful self-murder, you will then cry to Christ, and think *he must receive you*

upon

upon terms inconsistent with his justice, holiness and truth. But flatter not your selves; it will not be: *This is the accepted time: behold now is the day of salvation:* refuse it now, and it is lost for ever. O Sirs, if *this were the hour*, and you were *presently* to be *received* or *refused*, would you blame me to cry and call to you with all the fervour of my soul, if I knew that it were in your *own choice*, whether you would go to Heaven or Hell? Why, *now it is in your choice!* Life and Death are set before you. *Christ will receive you* if you will but come within the capacity of his acceptation. If you *will not*, there will *then* be no remedy: It is a doleful thing to observe how Satan doth bewitch poor sinners! That when time is gone, and the door of mercy is shut against them, they would think no cries too loud for mercy, and no importunity too great: for Christ telleth us, *Matth.* 25. 10, 11. that then they will cry [*Lord, Lord, open to us:*] And yet now when the door stands open, no *arguments*, no *earnestness*, no *tears* can *intreat* them to enter in; *Then* there is not the most senseless sinner of you all, but would cry more strongly than *Esau* for the blessing, (when his *tears* could *find no place for repentance*, Heb. 12. 16, 17.) [*Lord receive a miserable soul! O whither shall I go, if thou receive me not! I must else be tormented in those scorching flames:*] And yet *now* you will *sell your birthright for one morsel*; for a little of *Judas*, or *Gehezi's* gain, for the applause of worms, for the pleasing of your flesh that is turning to corruption; for the delights of gluttony, drunkenness, sports or lust. There

is

is not a man of you but would *then pray more earneſtly* than thoſe that you now *deride* for *earneſt praying*, as if they *whined* and were *ridiculous*: And yet *now* you will neither be *ſerious in prayer*, nor hear Chriſt or his meſſengers, when he maketh it his *earneſt requeſt* to *you* to come in to him, that you may have life, *John* 5. 40. *Then* you will knock when the door is ſhut, and cry [*Lord open to a miſerable ſinner:*] and yet *now* you *will not open* unto *him*, when by his word and ſpirit, his mercies and afflictions, he ſtandeth at the door of your ſtubborn hearts, and calleth on you to *repent* and *turn to God*; Now our *intreaties* cannot ſo much as bring you on *your knees*, or bring you to *one hours ſerious thoughts*, about the ſtate of thoſe ſouls that are ſo near their doom. O Sirs, for your ſouls ſake, lay by your obſtinacy: Pity thoſe ſouls that then you will beg of Chriſt to pity. Do not *you damn* them by your ſloth and ſin, in the day of your viſitation, and then cry in vain to *Chriſt to ſave them*, when it is too late. *Yet* the door of grace is open: But how ſpeedily will it be ſhut? One ſtroak of an Apoplexy, a Conſumption, a Fever, can quickly ſhut it; and then you may tear your hearts with crying [*Lord open to us*] and all in vain. O did you but *ſee departed ſouls*, as you ſee the *corps* that is left behind! Did *you ſee* how they are *treated* at their removal from the fleſh? how *ſome* are *taken* and *others left!* how *ſome* are *welcomed* to Chriſt, and *others* are *abhorred*, and turned over to the tormenter, and *thruſt out* with implacable indignation and diſdain (*Luk.* 13. 28. *Prov.* 1.

24, 26, 27.) sure you would enter into serious consideration this day, *What it is that makes this difference*; and *why Christ so useth the one and the other*; *and what must be done now, by the soul that would be received then?* Alas, men will do *any thing*, but that which they *should do!* Among the superstitious Papists, the conceit of a deliverance from Purgatory makes them bequeath their Lands and Moneys to Priests and Friars to pray for them when they are dead, and to have other men cry to Christ to *receive them, and open to them*, when time is past: And yet *now in the accepted time*, now when it is at *your choice*, and the *door is open*, men live as if they were *past feeling*, and cared not what became of them at the last, and would not be beholden to Christ to *receive* them, when the deceitful world hath cast them off.

And now, Beloved Hearers all, I would make it my most earnest request to you, as one that knoweth we are all passing hence, and foreseeth the case of a departed soul, that you would now without any more delay, prepare and make sure that you may be *received* into the everlasting habitations: And to this end, I shall more distinctly, though briefly tell you, 1. *What souls they are that Christ will receive, and what he will not*: and consequently, *what you must do to be received*. 2. *What considerations should stir you up to this preparation.*

I. Nothing is more sure than that Christ will *not receive*, 1. Any *unregenerate, unconverted soul*, John 3. 3, 5. Matth. 18. 3. that is *not renewed* and *sanctified by his Spirit*, Rom. 8. 9. Heb. 12. 14. Acts

26.

26. 18. They must have the *new* and *heavenly nature* that will ever come to Heaven: Without this you are morally uncapable of it. *Heaven* is the proper *inheritance of Saints*, Col. 1. 12. This heavenly nature, and spirit, is *your earnest*: If you have this, you are *sealed up unto salvation*, 2 Cor. 1. 22. Ephes. 1. 13. & 4. 30.

2. Christ will *receive none* but those that make it *now* their *work* to *lay up a treasure in heaven*, rather than upon the earth, *Matth.* 6. 20, 21. and that *seek it in the first place*, Mat. 6. 33. and can be content to part with all to purchase it, *Matth.* 13. 44, 46. *Luk.* 14 33. & 18. 22. An earthly-minded worldling is uncapable of heaven, in that condition, *Phil.* 3. 17, 18. *Luk.* 16. 13. You must take it for your portion, and set your hearts on it, if ever you will come thither; *Matth.* 6. 21. *Col.* 3. 1, 2, 3.

3. Christ will *Receive* no soul at last, but such as sincerely received him as their Lord and Saviour now, and gave up themselves to him, and received his Word, and yield obedience to it, and received his Spirit, and were cleansed by him from their iniquities, *John* 1. 11, 12. *Luk.* 19. 27. 2 *Thes.* 2. 10, 12. [*That all they might be damned that believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*] (They are God's own words: be not offended at them, but believe and fear.) *He hateth all the workers of iniquity*, and will say to them, *Depart from me, I know you not*, Psal. 5. 5. Matth. 7. 23.

4. He will *receive* none but those that loved his servants, that bore his holy image, and *received*

them according to their abilities, *Matth.* 25. 40, 41, &c. And if he will say to those that did not entertain them [*Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire,*] what will he say to those that *hate and persecute them?* 1 Joh. 3. 14. & 5. 2.

5. He will *receive none* but those that *live to him* in the body, and use his gifts and talents to his service, and make it their chief business to serve, and honour, and please him in the world, *Matth.* 25. 21, 26. 2 *Cor.* 5. 9, 15. *Gal.* 6. 7, 8. and *live not* to the *pleasing of the flesh*, but have *crucified it and its lusts*, Rom. 8. 1, 13. Gal. 5. 24.

Examine all these Texts of Scripture (for the matter is worthy of your study) and you will see what souls they are that Christ will *then Receive*, and what he will reject. You may see also what you must *now be* and *do*, if you will be *then Received*. If you are *not regenerate* by the *Spirit of God*, (though you may be Sacramentally regenerate in Baptism;) If you are not *justified by Christ*, (though you may be absolved by a Minister;) If if you seek not Heaven with higher estimation and resolutions than any felicity on earth, and take not God for your satisfying portion; (though you be never so Religious in subserviency to a fleshly worldly happiness;) If you *Receive not Christ* as your only Saviour, and set him not in the Throne and Government of your hearts and lives (though you may go with men for currant Christians;) If you hate not sin, if you love not the holy image, and children of God, and use them not accordingly; If you crucifie not the flesh, and die not to the world,

world, and deny not your ſelves, and live not unto God, as making it your chief buſineſs and happineſs to pleaſe him: I ſay, if this be not your caſe, as ſure as you are men, if you died this hour in this condition, Chriſt will not own you, but turn you off with a [*Depart ye curſed:*] You may as well think of reconciling *light and darkneſs*, or perſuade a *man* to live on the *food of beaſts*, or the *ſtomach* to welcome *deadly poyſon*, as to think that Chriſt will receive an ungodly, earthly, guilty ſoul.

Deceive not your ſelves ſinners: If God could have entertained the ungodly, and Heaven could hold unholy ſouls, anſwer me then theſe two or three Queſtions.

1. What need Chriſt then to have ſhed his blood, or become a ſacrifice for ſin? if he *could* have *received the ungodly*, he might have done it upon cheaper rates. This ſeigneth him to have died to no purpoſe, but to bring the unſanctified to heaven, that might have been as well entertained there without his ſufferings.

2. To what uſe doth Chriſt ſend the *Holy Ghoſt* to *ſanctifie* his Elect? Or ſend his *Word* and *Miniſters* to promote it, if they may come to heaven *unſanctified*?

3. If the ungodly go to Heaven, what uſe is *Hell* for? There is no Hell if this be true! But you will quickly find that to be too good news to the ungodly to be true.

II. In *Luk.* 16. Chriſt teacheth us our duty by the parable of the Steward, that asketh himſelf before-hand, *What he ſhall do when he muſt be no longer*

Steward?

Steward? and contriveth it so that others may *receive him* when he is cast off: And he applieth it to us that must now so provide, that *when we fail, we may be received into the everlasting habitations.* This is the work that we have all to mind! We always knew that this world would fail us: O how uncertain is your tenure of the dwellings that you now possess! Are you *provided, certainly provided whither to go, and who shall Receive you* when your Stewardship is ended, and you must needs go hence? O think of these considerations that should move you presently to provide.

1. *Your Cottages of earth are ready to drop down*; and it is a stormy time, there are many sicknesses abroad: One blast may quickly lay them in the dust; and then the flesh that had so much care, and was thought worthy to be preferred before the soul, must be laid and left to rot in darkness, to avoid the annoyance of the living: And when you may justly look every hour when you are turned out of these dwellings that you are in, is it not time to be provided of some other?

2. Consider, *if Christ* should not *receive thy spirit, how unspeakably deplorable thy case will be?* I think there is no man in all this Assembly so mad, that would take all the *world now*, to have his soul *refused then* by Christ; that would professedly make and subscribe such a bargain: And yet alas, how many are they that will be hired for a smaller price, even for the pleasure of a sin, to do that which Christ himself hath told them, will *cause* him to *Refuse* them? O Sirs, for ought you know, before

to

to morrow, or within this week, you may be put to *know these things by tryal*, and *your Souls* may be *refused* or *received*: And wo to you that ever you were Men, if Christ receive you not.

Consider, 1. *If Christ receive thee not, thou hast no Friend left then to receive thee.* Thy House, and Land, and Riches, and Reputation, are all left behind; none of them will go with thee; or if they did, they could afford thee no relief. Thy Bosom-friends, thy powerful Defenders, are all left behind; or if they go before or with thee, they can do nothing there, that could do so much for thee here. No Minister so holy, no Friend so kind, no Patron so powerful, that can give thee any entertainment, if Christ refuse to entertain thee. Look to the right hand or the left, there will be none to help thee, or care for thy forsaken Soul. Then thou wilt find, that one Christ had been a better Friend, than all the Great ones upon Earth.

2. *If Christ then receive not thy departed Soul, the Devils will receive it.* I am loth to speak so terrible a word, but that it *must* be spoken, if you will be awaked to prevent it. He that deceived thee, will then plead Conquest, and claim thee as his due, that he may torment thee. And if the Devil say, *This Soul is mine*; and Christ do not rescue and justifie thee, but say so too, no heart is able to conceive the horrour that will then overwhelm thee: Doth not the reading of the Sentence make thee tremble, *Matth.* 25. 41. [*Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels*]? This is that dreadful *delive-*

ring

ring up to Satan, when the Soul is excommunicated from the City of God. O therefore if thou be yet unreconciled to God, *agree with him quickly, while thou art here in the way, leſt he deliver thee* to this terrible Jaylor and Executioner, and *thou be caſt into the priſon of the bottomleſs pit: Verily I ſay unto thee, thou ſhalt by no means come out thence, till thou haſt paid the uttermoſt farthing*, Mat. 5. 25, 26.

3. *The greatneſs of the change will increaſe the amazement and miſery of thy Spirit, if Chriſt receive it not.* To leave a World that thou waſt acquainted with, a World that pleaſed thee and entertained thee, a World where thou hadſt long thy buſineſs and delight, and where (wretched man!) thou hadſt made thy chief proviſion, and laid up thy treaſure; this will be a ſad part of the Change. To enter into a World where thou art a ſtranger, and much worſe, and ſee the company and the things that before thou never ſaweſt, and to find things go there ſo contrary to thy expectation; to be turned with *Dives* from thy ſumptuous Dwelling, Attendance, and Fare, into a place of caſeleſs torment; this will be a ſadder part of thy Change. *Here* the Rich would have received thee, the Poor would have ſerved and flattered thee; thy Friends would have comforted thee, thy Play-fellows would have been merry with thee: But *there*, alas, how the caſe is altered! All theſe have done; the Table is withdrawn, the Game is ended, the Mirth is ceaſed; and now ſucceedeth, [*Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receiveſt thy good things*

things, and Lazarus *evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented,*] *Luke* 16. 25. O dreadful Change to those that made the World their home, and little dreamed (or did but dream) of such a day! Never to see this World again, unless by such reviews as will torment them! never to have sport or pleasure more; and for these to have such Company, such Thoughts, such Work and Usage, as God hath told us is in Hell!

4. *If Christ receive thee not, the burden of thy sins will overwhelm thee, and conscience will have no relief.* Sin will not then appear in so harmless a shape as now; it will then seem a more odious or frightful thing. O to remember these days of folly, of careless, sluggish, obstinate folly, of sottish negligence, and contempt of Grace, will be a more tormenting thing than you will now believe. If such Sermons and Discourses as foretel it are troublesom to thee, what then will that sad Experience be?

5. *The wrath of an offended God will overwhelm thee.* This will be thy Hell. He that was so merciful in the time of Mercy, will be most terrible and implacable when that time is past, and make men know that Christ and Mercy are not neglected, refused, and abused at so cheap a rate, as they would needs imagine in the time of their delirations.

6. *It will overwhelm the Soul, if Christ receive it not, to see that thou art entring upon Eternity, even into an everlasting state of Woe.* Then thou wilt think, O whither am I going? What must I endure?

dure? And how long! How long! When ſhall my miſery have an end! and When ſhall I come back! and How ſhall I ever be delivered! O now what thoughts wilt thou have of the wonderful Deſign of God in Man's Redemption! Now thou wilt better underſtand what a Saviour was worth, and how he ſhould have been believed in, and how his Goſpel and his ſaving Grace ſhould have been entertained.

O that the Lord would now open your hearts to entertain it, that you may not then value it to your vexation, that would not value it now to your relief! Poor ſinner, for the Lord's ſake, and for thy Souls ſake, I beg now of thee, as if it were on my knees, that thou wouldſt caſt away thy ſinful Cares and Pleaſures, and open thy Heart, and now receive thy Saviour and his ſaving Grace, as ever thou wouldſt have him then *receive* thy trembling departed Soul! Turn to him now, that he may not turn thee from him then: Forſake him not for a flattering World, a little tranſitory vain Delight, as ever thou wouldſt not then have thy departed Soul forſaken by him! O delay not, Man; but *now*, even *now receive him*, that thou maiſt avoid ſo terrible a danger, and put ſo great a queſtion preſently out of doubt, and be able comfortably to ſay, [*I have received Chriſt, and he will receive me; if I die this night, he will receive me.*] Then thou maiſt ſleep quietly, and live merrily, without any diſparagement to thy Reaſon. O yield to this Requeſt, Sinner, of one that deſireth thy Salvation. If thou wert now departing, and

I would not pray earneſtly to *Chriſt to receive thy Soul*, thou wouldſt think I were uncharitable: Alas! it will be one of theſe days: and it is *thee* that I muſt *entreat*, and thy *ſelf* that muſt be prevailed with, or there is no hope: *Chriſt* ſendeth me to *thy ſelf*, and ſaith, that *he is willing to receive thee, if now thou wilt receive him, and be ſanctified and ruled by him:* The matter ſtops at *thy own* regardleſs wilful heart. What ſayſt thou? *Wilt thou receive Chriſt now, or not?* Wilt thou be *a new creature, and live to God, by the Principle of his Spirit, and the Rule of his Word, to pleaſe him here, that thou maiſt live with him for ever?* Wilt thou take up this *Reſolution*, and make this *Covenant* with God this day? O give me a word of comfort, and ſay, Thou art *reſolved*, and wilt deliver up thy ſelf to Chriſt. That which is *my comfort now* on thy behalf, will be ten thouſand-fold more *thy comfort then*, when thou partakeſt of the Benefit: And if thou *grieve us now*, by denying thy Soul to *Chriſt*, it will be at *laſt* ten thouſand-fold more *thy grief*. Refuſe not *our requeſts* and *Chriſts requeſts now*, as ever thou wouldſt not have him refuſe *thee then*, and *thy requeſts*. It is *mens turning away* now from Chriſt, that will cauſe Chriſt then to turn from them, *Prov.* 1. 31. 32. *The turning away of the ſimple ſlayeth them*, and they then *eat but the fruit of their own way, and are filled with their own devices.*] *See then that ye now refuſe not him that ſpeaketh*: for there is no eſcaping *if you turn away from him that ſpeaketh from heaven.*] *Heb.* 12. 25.

What would you ſay your ſelves to the man that

would not be dissuaded from *setting his House on fire*, and then would *pray* and cry importunately to *God* that he would keep it from being burnt: Or of the man that will not be dissuaded from taking Poyson; and then when it gripeth him, will cry to God to save his life: Or of the man that will go to Sea in a leaking broken vessel, yea himself will make those breaches in it, that shall let the Water in, and when it is sinking, will cry to God to save him from being drowned? And will you do this about so great a matter as the everlasting state of your immortal Souls? Will you now be wordlings, and sensualists, and ungodly, and undo your selves, and then cry [*Lord Jesus receive my Spirit*] at the last? What! receive an *unholy Spirit*? Will you not knock till the door is shut? when he telleth you, *Math.* 7. 21. That *it is not every one that will cry Lord, Lord, that shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the will of his Father which is in Heaven.*]

Lastly, consider with what unspeakable joy it will fill thy Soul, to be then *received* by the Lord. O what a joyful word will it be, when thou shalt hear, [*Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you.*] If thou wilt not have this to be thy case, thou shalt *see those received* to the increase of thy grief, whom thou *refusedst* here to imitate: *There shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth, when ye shall see* Abraham, Isaac, *and* Jacob, *and all the Prophets in the Kingdom of God*, and those that *from East, West, North and South shall sit there with them, and thou thrust out.*] *Luke* 13. 27, 28, 29.

I

I have been long in this part of my application, having to do with Souls that are ready to depart, and are in so sad an unprepared state, as is not to be thought on but with great compassion: I am next to come to that part of the application, which I chiefly intended; to those that are the Heirs of Life.

II. O You that are members of Jesus Christ, receive this Cordial which may corroborate your hearts against all inordinate fears of Death: Let it come when it will, you may boldly recommend your departing Souls into the hands of Christ. Let it be by a lingring disease, or by an acute, by a natural or a violent death, at the fulness of your age, or in the flower of your youth, death can but separate the Soul from Flesh, but not from Christ. Whether you die poor or rich, at liberty or in prison, in your native Country or a forein Land, whether you be buried in the Earth or cast into the Sea; death shall but send your Souls to Christ. Though you die under the reproach and slanders of the world, and your names be cast out among men, as evil doers, yet Christ will take your Spirits to himself. Though your Souls depart in fear and trembling, though they want the sense of the Love of God, and doubt of pardon and peace with him, yet Christ will receive them.

I know thou wilt be ready to say, that thou art *unworthy*, [*Will he receive so unworthy a Soul as mine?*]

mine?] But if thou be a member of Christ, thou art *worthy in him* to be accepted. *Thou* hast a *worthiness* of *Aptitude*, and *Christ* hath a *worthiness* of *merit*.

The day that cometh upon such *at unawares* that have their *hearts over-charged with surfeiting, drunkenness, and the cares of this life*, and *as a snare* surprizeth the *inhabitants of the earth*, shall be the day of thy great deliverance: *Watch therefore and pray alwayes that you may be accounted worthy to escape all those things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the son of man*; Luke. 21. 34, 35, 36. *They that are accounted worthy to obtain that world, can die no more; for they are equal to the Angels, and are the children of God*, Luke 20. 35, 36.

Object. *O but my sins are great and many; and will Christ ever receive so ignorant, so earthly and impure a Soul as mine?*

Answ. If he have freed thee from the *reign* of sin, by giving thee a *Will that would fain be fully delivered from it*, and given thee a *desire* to be *perfectly holy*, he will finish the work that he hath begun; and will not bring thee *defiled* into Heaven, but will *wash* thee in his *Blood*, and separate all the remnant of corruption from thy Soul, when he separateth thy Soul from flesh: There needs no *purgatory* but his *blood* and *Spirit* in the instant of death shall deliver thee, that he may present thee *spotless* to the Father.

O fear not then to *trust thy Soul* with him that will *Receive* it: And fear not *death*, that can do thee no more harm. And when once thou hast

overcome

overcome the *fears* of *death*, thou wilt be the more *resolute* in thy *duty*, and *faithful* to Christ, and above the power of *most temptations*, and wilt not fear the face of *man*, when *Death* is the *worst* that *man* can bring thee to. It is true, *Death* is *dreadful*; but it is as true that the *arms of Christ* are *joyful*. It is an unpleasing thing to leave the *Bodies* of our *friends* in the *earth*: but it is unspeakable pleasure to *their Souls*, to be *Received* into the *Heavenly society* by Christ.

And how *confidently*, *quietly*, and *comfortably* you may commend your *departing Spirits* to be *received by Christ*, be informed by these considerations following.

1. Your *Spirits are Christs own*: And may you not *trust* him with *his own*? As they are *his* by the title of *creation*, (*All Souls are mine, saith the Lord* Ezek. 18. 4.) So also by the title of *redemption*: *We are not our own, we are bought with a price*, 1 Cor. 6. 19. Say therefore to him, [*Lord I am* thine *much more than my* own; Receive thine own; *Take care of* thine own! *Thou dreweſt me to* consent *to thy gracious Covenant, and I resigned my self and all I had to thee! and thou* swarest *to me, and I became* thine, (Ezek. 16. 8.): *and I stand to the Covenant that I made, though I have offended thee! I am sinful, but I am* thine, *and would not forsake thee! and change my Lord and Master for a world: O know* thine own, *and* own *my Soul that hath* owned *thee, though it hath sinned against thee. Thy sheep know thy voice, and follow not a stranger: Now know thy poor sheep, and leave them not to the devourer: Thy Lambs have been preserved*

by

by thee among Wolves in the world: Preserve me now from the enemy of souls. I am thine, *O save me,* (Psalm 119. 94.) *and lose not that which is thine own.*

2. Consider that *thou art his upon so dear a purchace, as that he is the more engaged to receive thee.* Hath he bought thee by the price of his most *precious blood,* and will he cast thee off: Hath he *come down* on earth to *seek and save thee,* and will he now *forsake* thee? Hath he lived in flesh a life of poverty, and suffered reproach, and scorn, and buffetings, and been nailed to the Cross, and put to cry out, [*My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me!*] And will he now *forget* his *love,* and *sufferings,* and *himself forsake thee* after this? Did he himself on the Cross, *commend his spirit into his Father's hands,* and will he not *receive thy spirit* when thou at death *commendest* it to *him*? He hath known *himself* what it is to have a *humane soul separated from the body,* and the *body buried in a grave,* and there lamented by surviving friends: And why did he this, but that he might be fit to receive and relieve thee in the like condition? O who would not be encouraged to encounter *death,* and lie down in a *grave,* that believeth that *Christ did so before him,* and considereth *why* he went that way, and what a *Conquest* he hath made.

I know an Argument from the *Death of Christ,* will not prove his love to the souls of the ungodly, so as to infer that he will *receive them*: but it will prove his *Reception* of *Believers souls*: [*He that spared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all,*

how

how shall he not with him also freely give us all things!] *Rom.* 8. 32. is an infallible argument as to *Believers*, but not as to those that do reject him.

Say therefore to him, [*O my Lord! Can it be that thou couldst come down in flesh, and be abused, and spit upon, and slandred, and crucified! that thou couldst bleed, and die, and be buried for me, and now be unwilling to receive me! that thou shouldst pay so dear for souls, and now refuse to entertain them! that thou shouldst die to save them from the devil, and now wilt leave them to his cruelty: that thou hast* conquered *him, and yet wilt suffer him at last to have the* prey! *To whom can a departing soul fly for refuge and for entertainment, if not to thee that diedst for souls, and sufferedst thine to be separated from the flesh, that we might have all assurance of thy compassion unto ours!*] *'Thou didst openly declare upon the Cross, 'that the reason of thy dying was to Receive departed 'souls, when thou didst thus encourage the soul of a 'penitent Malefactor, by telling him,* [This day shalt 'thou be with me in Paradise.] *O give the same en-'couragement or entertainment to this sinful soul that 'flyeth unto thee, and trusteth in thy death and merits, 'and is coming to receive thy doom.*]

3. Consider that *Jesus Christ is full of Love, and tender compassion to souls*: What his tears over *Lazarus* compelled the Jews to say, *John* 11. 36. [*Behold how he loved him!*] the same his incarnation, life and death should much more stir us up to say,

with greater admiration, [Behold how he loved us!] The foregoing words, though the ſhorteſt verſe in all the Bible, [verſ. 35. *Jeſus wept,*] are long enough to prove his love to *Lazarus*: and the Holy Ghoſt would not have the *tears of Chriſt* to be *unknown* to us, that his *love* may be the better known. But we have a far larger demonſtration of his love: *He loved us, and gave himſelf for us*, Gal. 2. 20. And by what gift could he better teſtifie his love? *He loved us, and waſhed us in his blood*, Rev. 1. 5. *He loveth us as the Father loveth him*, John 15. 9. And may we not comfortably go to him that *loveth us*? will *Love refuſe us* when we fly unto him?

Say then to Chriſt [*O thou that haſt* loved *my ſoul, Receive it! I commend it not unto an enemy: Can that Love reject me and caſt me into hell, that ſo oft embraced me on earth, and hath declared it ſelf by ſuch ample teſtimonies?*]

O had we but more *love to Chriſt*, we ſhould be more ſenſible of *his love to us*, and then we ſhould truſt him, and *love* would make us haſten to him, and with confidence caſt our ſelves upon him.

4. Conſider that *it is the Office of Chriſt to ſave ſouls, and to receive them*, and therefore we may boldly recommend them to his hands. The *Father ſent him to be the Saviour of the world*, 1 John 4. 14. And he is *effectively* the Saviour *of his body*, *Eph.* 5. 23. And may we not truſt him in his undertaken

undertaken office, that would truſt a Phyſician or any other in his office, if we judge him faithful? Yea, he is engaged by *Covenant* to *Receive us*: When we gave up our ſelves to him, he alſo became ours; and we did it on this condition, *that he ſhould receive and ſave us*: And it was the condition of his *own undertaking*: *He* drew the Covenant himſelf, and tendred it firſt to us, and *aſſumed his own Conditions*, as he *impoſed ours*.

Say then to him, [*My Lord, I expect but the performance of* thy Covenants, *and the diſcharge of thine* undertaken Office: *As thou haſt cauſed* me *to believe in thee, and love and ſerve thee, and perform the conditions which thou laidſt on me, though with many ſinful failings which thou haſt pardoned: ſo now let my ſoul that hath truſted on thee, have the full experience of thy fidelity, and take me to thy ſelf according to* thy Covenant. *O now remember the word unto thy ſervant, upon which thou haſt cauſed him to hope!* (Pſalm 119.49.) *How many precious promiſes haſt thou left us, that we ſhall* not be forſaken by thee, *but that we ſhall be* with thee where thou art, *that we may* behold thy glory! For this cauſe art thou the Mediator of the New Covenant, that by means of death for the redemption of the tranſgreſſions that were under the firſt Teſtament, they which are called might receive the promiſe of eternal Inheritance: (*Heb.* 9. 15.) *According to thy Covenant*, Godlineſs hath the promiſe of the life that now is, and of that which is to come, 1 *Tim.* 4. 8. *and when* we have done thy will (*notwithſtanding*

with greater admiration, [Behold how he loved us!] The foregoing words, though the shortest verse in all the Bible, [verſ. 35. *Jesus wept*,] are long enough to prove his love to *Lazarus*: and the Holy Ghost would not have the *tears of Christ* to be *unknown* to us, that his *love* may be the better known. But we have a far larger demonstration of his love: *He loved us, and gave himself for us*, Gal. 2. 20

stifie his lov

Rev. 1. 5. *He*

15. 9. And

that *loveth*

unto him?

Say then

soul, Receive

Can that Lov

oft embraced

such ample te

O had we

more sensibl

trust him, and *love* would make us hasten to him, and with confidence cast our selves upon him.

Print Faded

Illegible in p

4. Consider that *it is the Office of Christ to save souls, and to receive them*, and therefore we may boldly recommend them to his hands. The *Father sent him to be the Saviour of the world*, 1 John 4. 14. And he is *effectively* the Saviour *of his body*, *Eph.* 5. 23. And may we not trust him in his undertaken

undertaken office, that would trust a Physician or any other in his office, if we judge him faithful? Yea, he is engaged by *Covenant* to *Receive us*: When we gave up our selves to him, he also became ours; and we did it on this condition, *that he should receive and save us*: And it was the condition of his *own undertaking*: *He* drew the Covenant himself, and tendred it first to us, and *assu-* [illegible] he *imposed ours*.

[illegible] *y Lord, I expect but the* [illegible] *nts, and the discharge of* [illegible] *As thou hast caused* me *to* [illegible] *d serve thee, and perform* [illegible] *laidst on me, though with* [illegible] *ou hast pardoned: so now* [illegible] *on thee, have the full ex-* [illegible] *take me to thy self accor-* [illegible] *now remember the word* [illegible] *h thou hast caused him to* [illegible] *How many precious pro-* [illegible] *we shall* not be forsaken [illegible] *be* with thee where thou art, *that we may* behold thy glory! For this cause art thou the Mediator of the New Covenant, that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first Testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal Inheritance: (*Heb.* 9. 15.) *According to thy Covenant*, Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come, 1 *Tim.* 4. 8. *and when* we have done thy will (*not-*

with greater admiration, [Behold how he loved us!] The foregoing words, though the ſhorteſt verſe in all the Bible, [verſ. 35. *Jeſus wept,*] are long enough to prove his love to *Lazarus*: and the Holy Ghoſt would not have the *tears of Chriſt* to be *unknown* to us, that his *love* may be the better known. But we have a far larger demonſtration of his love: *He loved us, and gave himſelf for us,* Gal. 2. 20. And by what gift could hebetter teſtifie his love? *He loved us, and waſhed us in his blood,* Rev. 1. 5. *He loveth us as the Father loveth him,* John 15. 9. And may we not comfortably go to him that *loveth us?* will *Love refuſe us* when we fly unto him?

Say then to Chriſt [*O thou that haſt* loved *my ſoul, Receive it! I commend it not unto an enemy: Can that Love reject me and caſt me into hell, that ſo oft embraced me on earth, and hath declared it ſelf by ſuch ample teſtimonies?*]

O had we but more *love to Chriſt,* we ſhould be more ſenſible of *his love to us,* and then we ſhould truſt him, and *love* would make us haſten to him, and with confidence caſt our ſelves upon him.

4. Conſider that *it is the Office of Chriſt to ſave ſouls, and to receive them,* and therefore we may boldly recommend them to his hands. The *Father ſent him to be the Saviour of the world,* 1 John 4. 14. And he is *effectively* the Saviour *of his body, Eph.* 5. 23. And may we not truſt him in his undertaken

undertaken office, that would trust a Physician or any other in his office, if we judge him faithful? Yea, he is engaged by *Covenant* to *Receive us*: When we gave up our selves to him, he also became ours; and we did it on this condition, *that he should receive and save us*: And it was the condition of his *own undertaking*: *He* drew the Covenant himself, and tendred it first to us, and *assumed his own Conditions*, as he *imposed ours*.

Say then to him, [*My Lord, I expect but the performance of* thy Covenants, *and the discharge of thine* undertaken Office: *As thou hast caused* me *to believe in thee, and love and serve thee, and perform the conditions which thou laidst on me, though with many sinful failings which thou hast pardoned: so now let my soul that hath trusted on thee, have the full experience of thy fidelity, and take me to thy self according to* thy Covenant. *O now remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused him to hope!* (Psalm 119.49.) *How many precious promises hast thou left us, that we shall* not be forsaken by thee, *but that we shall be* with thee where thou art, *that we may* behold thy glory! For this cause art thou the Mediator of the New Covenant, that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first Testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal Inheritance: (*Heb.* 9. 15.) *According to thy Covenant*, Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come, 1 *Tim.* 4. 8. *and when* we have done thy will (*notwithstanding*

withstanding our lamentable imperfections) *we are to* receive the promise, *Heb.* 10. 36. *O now receive me into the* Kingdom *which thou hast* promised to them that love thee, *James* 1. 12.

5. Consider *how able Christ is to answer thine expectations: All power is given him in Heaven and Earth,* Matth. 28. 19. and *All things are given by the Father into his hands,* John 13. 3. *All Judgment is committed to him,* John 5. 22. It is fully in his *power* to *receive* and *save* thee: And Satan cannot touch thee but by his consent: [*Fear not* then, *he is the First and Last, that liveth, and was dead, and behold he liveth for evermore,* Amen; *and hath the Keys of Hell and Death.*] Rev. 1. 17, 18.

Say then, *If thou* wilt *Lord, thou* canst *save this departing soul! O say but the word, and I shall live: Lay but thy rebuke upon the destroyer, and he shall be restrained: When my Lord and dearest Saviour hath the Keys, how can I be kept out of thy Kingdom? or cast into the burning lake? Were it a matter of Difficulty unto thee, my soul might fear lest Heaven would not be opened to it: But thy Love hath overcome the hindrances: and it is as* easie *to* receive *me as to* Love *me.*]

6. Consider *how perfectly thy Saviour is acquainted with the place that thou art going to, and the company and employment which thou must there have:* and therefore as there is nothing *strange to him,* so the *ignorance* and *strangeness in thy self* should therefore

therefore make thee fly *to him*, and truſt him, and recommend thy ſoul to him, and ſay, [*Lord, it would be terrible to my departing ſoul, to go into a world that I never ſaw, and into a place ſo ſtrange, and unto company ſo far above me; but that I know there is nothing* ſtrange *to* thee, *and thou knoweſt it for me, and I may better truſt thy knowledg than mine own: when I was a child, I knew not my own inheritance, nor what was neceſſary to the daily proviſions for my life; but my parents knew it, that cared for me: The eyes muſt ſee for all the body, and not every member ſee for it ſelf; O cauſe me as quietly and believingly to commit my Soul to thee, to be poſſeſſed of the Glory which thou ſeeſt and poſſeſſeſt, as if I had ſeen and poſſeſſed it my ſelf: ad let* thy knowledg *be* my truſt.]

7. Conſider, That *Chriſt hath provided a glorious receptacle for faithful Souls*; and it cannot be imagined that he will *loſe his preparations*, or be fruſtrate of his end. All that he did and ſuffered on earth, was for this end. He therefore became the *Captain of our ſalvation*, and was *made perfect through ſufferings, that he might bring many ſons to glory*, Heb. 2. 10. He hath taken poſſeſſion in our Nature, and is himſelf interceding for us in the Heavens, *Heb.* 7. 25. And for *whom* doth he provide this Heavenly Building not made with hands, but for *Believers*? If therefore any inordinate fear ſurprize thee, remember what he hath ſaid, *John* 14. 1, 2, 3. [*Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe alſo in me: In my Fathers houſe*

houſe are many manſions; if it were not ſo, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you: And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto my ſelf, that where I am, there ye may be alſo.

Say therefore, [*Lord, when thou hadſt made this lower narrow world, thou wouldſt not leave it uninhabited: For* Man *thou madeſt it, and* Man *thou placedſt in it. And when thou haſt prepared that more* capacious glorious World, *for thy* redeemed flock, *it cannot be that thou wilt ſhut them out. O therefore receive my fearful Soul, and help me to obey thine own command, Luke* 12. 32. Fear not, little flock, for it is your Fathers good pleaſure to give you the kingdom.] *O let me hear that joyful Sentence, Matth.* 25. 34. Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.]

8. Conſider, *That Chriſt hath received thy Soul unto Grace, and therefore he will receive it unto Glory.* He hath quickned us who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, wherein in time paſt we walked, &c. *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in ſins and treſpaſſes, quickned us together with Chriſt, and raiſed us up together, and made us ſit together in heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus, Epheſ.* 2. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. The State of Grace is the *kingdom of heaven*, as well as the State of Glory, *Matth.* 3. 2. & 10. 7. & 13. 11, 24, 31, 33, 44, 45, 47. By

Grace

Grace thou haſt the *heavenly birth* and *nature*: We are *firſt born* to *trouble and ſorow* in the World; but we are *new born* to *everlaſting joy and pleaſure*. *Grace* maketh us *Heirs*, and giveth us *Title*; and therefore at *death* we ſhall have poſſeſſion. *The Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in Heaven for us*, 1 Peter 1. 3, 4. The great work was done in the day of thy Renovation: Then thou waſt entred into *the houſhold of God*, and made a *fellow Citizen with the Sants*, and receivedſt the *Spirit of adoption*, Eph. 2. 19. Gal. 4. 6. He gave thee *life eternal* when he gave the *knowledge of himſelf* and of *his Son*, John 17. 3. And will he now take from thee the Kingdom which he hath given thee? Thou waſt once his *Enemy*, and he hath Received thee already into his favour, and *reconciled* thee to himſelf: and will he not then receive thee to his Glory? Rom. 5. 8, 9, 10, 11. *God commendeth his Love towards us, in that while we were yet ſinners, Chriſt dyed for us: Much more then being now juſtified by his blood, we ſhall be ſaved from wrath through him. For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more being reconciled we ſhall be ſaved by his life: And not only ſo, but we alſo joy in God, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom we have now received the attonement.*] And when we have *peace with God, being juſtified by faith*, (Rom. 5. 1.) why ſhould we doubt whether he will

will receive us? The great impediments and cauſe of fear are now removed: Unpardoned ſin is taken away: Our debt is diſcharged. We have a ſufficient Anſwer againſt all that can be alledged to the prejudice of our Souls; yea, it is Chriſt himſelf that anſwereth for us, *It is he that juſtifieth, Who then ſhall condemn us?* Will he not juſtifie thoſe at laſt, whom he hath here juſtified? Or will he *juſtifie us*, and yet *not receive us?* That were both to *juſtifie* and *condemn us.*

Depart then in peace, O fearful Soul: Thou falleſt into his hands that hath juſtified thee by his Blood; will he deny thee the Inheritance of which he himſelf hath made thee Heir? yea, a Joynt-heir with himſelf, *Rom.* 8. 17. Will he deprive thee of thy Birth-right, who himſelf begot thee of the incorruptible Seed? If he would not have received thee to Glory, he would not have drawn thee to himſelf, and have blotted out thine Iniquities, and received thee by reconciling Grace. Many a time he hath received the ſecret Petitions, Complaints, and Groans which thou haſt poured out before him, and hath given thee acceſs with boldneſs to his Throne of Grace, when thou couldſt not have acceſs to Man; and he hath taken thee up, when Man hath caſt thee off. Surely he that received thee ſo readily in thy diſtreſs, will not now at laſt repent him of his love. As *Manoah*'s Wife ſaid, *Judges* 13. 23. *If the Lord were pleaſed to kill us, he would not have received a burnt-offering and a meat-offering at our hands,*

hands, neither would he have shewed us all these things.] He hath received thee into his *Church*, and entertained thee with the delights and fatness of his House (*Psalm*, 36. 8.) and bid thee welcome to his Table, and feasted thee, with his *Body* and his *Blood*, and communicated *in these* his *quickning Spirit*: And will he then disown thee, and refuse thee, when thou drawest nearer him, and art cast upon him for thy final doom? After so many receptions in the way of Grace, dost thou yet doubt of his Receiving thee?

9, Consider, *How nearly thou art related to him in this state of Grace*: Thou art his *Child*; and hath he not the bowels of a *Father*? when thou didst *ask bread*, he was not used to give thee a *stone*; and will he give thee *Hell*, when thou *askest* but the entertainment in *Heaven*, which he hath *promised* thee? Thou art his *friend*, *John* 15. 14, 15. and will he not receive his *friends*? Thou art his *Spouse*, betrothed to him the very day when thou consentedst to his Covenant; and where then shouldst thou live but *with him*? Thou art a *member of his body, of his flesh and bone*, Eph. 5. 30. and no *man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church*, ver. 29. As he came down in flesh to be a Suitor to thee, so he caused thee to let go all for him; and will he now forsake thee? Suspect it not; but quietly resign thy soul into his hands, and say,

[*Lord take this Soul, that pleads Relation to thee; It is the voice of thy Child that cryeth to thee; The name of a Father, which thou hast assumed towards*

me, is my encouragement: When thou didst call us out of the world unto thee, thou saidst, [I will receive you, and I will be a Father to you, and ye shall be my Sons and Daughters, 2 Cor. 6. 17, 18, *O our Father which art in Heaven, shut not out thy Children; the Children of thy love and promise: The compassion that* thou *hast put into* Man, *ingageth him to relieve a* Neighbour, *yea an* Enemy; *much more to* entertain a Child: *Our* Children *and our* Friends *dare trust themselves upon* our kindness *and* fidelity; *and fear not that we will reject them in their distress, or destroy them, though they do sometime offend us: Our* kindness *is* cruelty *in comparison of* thine: Our Love *deserveth not the* name *of* Love, *in comparison of* thy *most precious* Love: Thine *is the* love of God, *who is* Love it self, (1 Joh. 4. 8, 16.) *and who is the* God of Love? (2 Cor. 1. 13, 11.) *and is answerable to thine* Omnipotency, Omniscience, *and other Attributes? But* ours *is the* love of frail *and* finite *sinful* men: *As we may pray to thee to* Forgive us our trespasses, for we also forgive those that have trespassed against us: *So we may pray to thee to* receive us, *though we have offended thee; for even we receive those that have offended us: Hath thy Love unto thine own its* breadth and length, and height, and depth, *and is it such as* passeth knowledge (Ephes. 3. 17, 18, 19.) *and yet canst thou exclude* thine own, *and shut them out that cry unto thee? Can that love which washed me, and took me home, when I lay wallowing in my Blood, reject me, when it hath so far recovered me? Can that Love now thrust me out of Heaven, that lately fetch'd me from the gates of Hell, and placed me*

among

among thy Saints? Whom thou loveſt, thou loveſt to the end, *John* 13. 1. Thou art not as man that thou ſhouldſt repent, (*Num.* 23. 19.) with thee is no variableneſs or ſhadow of turning: (*Jam.* 1. 17.) *If* yeſterday *thou ſo* freely lovedſt *me, as to adopt me for thy child, thou wilt not* to day *refuſe me and caſt me into Hell. Receive Lord Jeſus a member of thy body. A weak one indeed, but yet a member, and needeth the more thy tenderneſs and compaſſion, who haſt taught* us *not to caſt out* our Infants, *becauſe they are* ſmall *and* weak: *We have forſaken all to cleave unto thee, that we might with thee be* one fleſh and ſpirit, Epheſ. 5. 31. 1 Cor. 6. 17. *O cut not off and caſt not out thy members that are engrafted into thee! Thou haſt* dwelt in me *here by* faith; *and ſhall I not now* dwell with thee? (Epheſ. 3. 17.) *Thou haſt prayed to the Father, that* we may be one in thee, and may be with thee to behold thy Glory, (John 17. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24.) *And wilt thou deny to receive me to that glory, who pray but for what thou haſt prayed to thy Father? Death maketh no ſeparation between thee and thy members: It diſſolveth not the* union *of* ſouls with thee, *though it ſeparate them from the fleſh: And ſhall a part of thy fulneſs be rejected and condemned?*

10. Conſider, That *Chriſt hath ſealed thee up unto ſalvation, and given thee the earneſt of his Spirit*; and therefore will certainly receive thee, 2 *Cor.* 1. 22. and 5. 5, Eph. 1. 13, 14. and 4. 30. Say therefore to him, [*Behold Lord, thy mark, thy ſeal, thine earneſt: Fleſh and blood did not illuminate, and renew me: Thy ſpirit which thou haſt given me, is my witneſs that*

I am thine, Rom. 8. 16. *And wilt thou disown and refuse the soul that thou hast sealed?*]

11. Consider, That *he that hath given thee a Heavenly mind, will certainly* Receive *thee into heaven*: If thy treasure were not there, thy heart would never have been there, *Mat.* 6. 21. Thy weak desires do shew what he intends thee he for, kindled not those desires in vain. Thy love to him (though too small) is a certain proof that he intends not to reject thee: It cannot be that God can damn, or Christ refuse a Soul that doth sincerely Love him: He that Loveth, dwelleth in God, and God in him, 1 *John* 4. 15, 16. And shall he not then dwell with God for ever? God fitteth the nature of every creature to its *use*, and agreeably to the element in which they dwell: And therefore when he gave thee the heavenly nature, (though but in weak beginnings) it shewed his will to make thee an inhabitant of heaven.

Say therefore to him, [*O Lord, I had never loved thee if thou hadst not begun and loved me first: I had not not minded thee, or desired after thee, if thou hadst not kindled these desires: It cannot be that thy Grace it self should be a deceit and misery, and intended but to Tantalize us; and that thou hast set thy Servants Souls on longing for that which thou wilt never give them. Thou wouldst not have given me the wedding garment, when thou didst invite me, if thou hadst meant to keep me out: Even the grain of mustard-seed which thou sowedst in my heart, was a kind*

kind of Promise of the Happiness to which it tendeth: indeed I have loved thee so little, that I am ashamed of my self, and confess my cold indifferency deserves thy wrath: But that I love *thee and* desire *thee is thy gift, which signifieth the higher satisfying gift: Though I am cold and dull, my eyes are towards thee, It is thee that I mean when I can but groan: It is long since I have bid this world away; It shall not be my home or portion: O perfect what thou hast begun: This is not the time or place of my perfection: And though my life be now hid with thee in God, when thou appearest, let me appear with thee in glory,* Col. 3. 4. *and in the mean time let this soul enjoy its part, that appeareth before thee: Give me what thou hast caused me to Love, and then I shall more perfectly love thee, when my thirst is satisfied, and the water which thou hast given me, shall spring up to everlasting life,* Joh. 4. 14.

12. Consider also, That *he that hath engaged thee to seek first his Kingdom, is engaged to give it them that do sincerely seek it.* He called thee off the pursuit of vanity, when thou wast following the pleasures and profits of the world; and he called thee to labour for the food that perisheth not, but endureth to everlasting life, *John* 6. 27. Since then it hath been thy care and business, (notwithstanding all thine imperfections) to seek and serve him, to please and honour him, and so to run that thou mightest obtain.

Say then, [*Though my sins deserve thy wrath, and nothing that I have done deserve thy favour, yet Godliness hath thy Promise of the Life to come; and thou hast said, that he that seeks shall find,* Matth. 7. 7, 8. O

now let me find the Kingdom that I have sought, and sought by thy encouragement and help: It cannot be that any should have cause to repent of serving thee, or suffer disappointment that trusts upon thee: My labour for the World was lost and vain; but thou didst engage me to be stedfast *and* abound in thy work, *on this account that my* labour should not be in vain, 1 Cor. 15. 58. *Now give the full and final answer unto all my Prayers: Now that I have done the fight, and finished my course, let me find the Crown of righteousness which thy mercy hath laid up,* 2 Tim. 4. 8. *O Crown thy graces, and with thy greatest mercies recompence and perfect thy preparatory mercies, and let me be* Received *to thy glory, who have been guided by thy counsel,* (Psalm. 73. 24.)

13. Consider, That *Christ hath already received millions of Souls, and never was unfaithful unto any,* There are now with him the spirits of the just made perfect, that in this life were imperfect as well as you. Why then should you not comfortably trust him with your Souls? and say, [*Lord thou art the Common Salvation and refuge of thy Saints: Both strong and weak, even all that are given thee by the Father shall come to thee; and those that come thou wilt in no wise cast out: Thousands have been entertained by thee, that were unworthy in themselves as well as I: It is few of thy members that are now on earth, in comparison of those that are with thee in Heaven: Admit me Lord into the new* Jerusalem: *Thou wilt have thy house to be filled: O take my Spirit into the number of those blessed ones, that shall come from East, West, North*

and

and South, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac *and* Jacob *in the Kingdom, that we may together with eternal joyes, give thanks and praise to thee that hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.*

14. Consider, That *it is the will of the Father himself that we should be glorified:* He therefore *gave us* to *his Son*; and *gave his Son for us*, to be our Saviour, that *whoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life:* All our Salvation is the product of his Love, *Joh.* 3. 16, 17. *Eph.* 2. 4. *Joh.* 6. 37. *Joh.* 16. 26, 27. *I say not that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me,* &c.] John 14. *He that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest my self to him.*

Say therefore with our dying Lord, [*Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit: By thy Son who is the way, the truth and the life, I come to thee,* (Joh. 14. 6.) *Fulness of joy is in thy presence, and everlasting pleasures at thy right hand* (Psalm. 16. 11.) *Thy love redeemed me, renewed and preserved me: O now receive me to the fulness of thy Love: This was thy* will *in sending thy Son, that of all that thou gavest him he should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. O let not now this Soul be lost that is passing to thee through the straits of death* [*I had* never come unto thy Son, *if thou hadst* not drawn me; *and if I had* not heard and learnt *of thee,* John 6, 44, 45. *I thank thee O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that thou hast revealed to me a babe, an idiot, the blessed mysteries of thy Kingdom:*

(Luk.

(Luk. 10. 21. Acts 4 13.) *O now as the vail of flesh must be withdrawn, and my soul be parted from this body, withdraw the vail of thy displeasure, and shew thy servant the glory of thy presence: that he that hath seen thee but as in a glass, may see thee now with open face: and when my earthly house of this Tabernacle is dissolved, let me inhabit thy building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,* 2 Cor. 5. 1.

15. Lastly consider, That *God hath designed the everlasting glory of his name, and the pleasing of his blessed will, in our salvation:* And the Son must triumph in the perfection of his conquest of Sin and Satan, and in the perfecting of our Redemption. And doubtless he will not lose his Fathers glory and his own: Say then with confidence, [*I resign my soul to thee O Lord who hast called and chosen me, that thou mightest make known the riches of thy glory on me, as a vessel of mercy prepared unto glory,* (Rom. 9. 23.) *Thou hast predestinated me to the adoption of thy child by Christ unto thy self, to the praise of the glory of thy grace, wherein thou hast made me accepted in thy beloved,* (Eph. 1. 5, 6, 11, 12.) *Receive me now to the glory which thou hast prepared for us,* Mat. 25. 34.) *The hour is at hand, Lord glorifie thy poor adopted child, that he may for ever glorify thee* (Joh. 17. 1.) *It is thy Promise to glorify those whom thou dost justify,* (Rom. 8. 30.) *As therere is no condemnation to them that are in Christ,* (Rom. 8. 1.) *so now let him present me faultless before the presence of the glory with exceeding joy, And to thee the only wise God our Saviour, be the glory, Majesty Dominion and Power for evermore, Amen.*: Jude v. 23, 24.

What

WHat now remaineth, but that we all set our selves to learn this sweet and necessary task, that we may joyfully perform it in the hour of our extremity, even to *recommend our departing Souls to Christ, with confidence that he will receive them!* It is a lesson not easie to be learnt: For Faith is weak, and doubts, and fears will easily arise; and nature will be loth to think of dying; and we that have so much offended Christ, and lived so strangely to him, and been entangled in too much familiarity with the World, shall be apt to shrink when we should joyfully trust him with our departing Souls. O therefore now set your selves to overcome these difficulties in time! You know we are all ready to depart: It is time this last important work were throughly learned, that our death may be both safe and comfortable.

There are divers other Uses of this Doctrine that I should have urged upon you, had there been time. As, 1. If Christ will receive your departing Souls, then fear not death, but long for this Heavenly entertainment.

2. Then do not fall for fear of them that can but kill the body, and send the soul to Christ.

3. Then think not the righteous unhappy, because they are cast off by the world; neither be too much troubled at it your selves, when it comes to be your case: but remember that Christ will not forsake you, and that none can hinder him from

the Receiving of your Souls: No malice nor slanders can follow you so far as by defamation to make your justifyer condemn you.

4. If you may trust him with your Souls, let trust him with your friends, your Children that you must leave behind, with all your concernments and affairs; and trust him with his Gospel and his Church; for they are all his own, and he will prevail to the accomplishment of his blessed pleasure.

But, 5. I shall only add that Use which the sad occasion of our meeting doth bespeak. What cause have we now to mix our sorrows for our deceased friend, with the joyes of faith for her felicity! We have left the body to the earth, and that is our lawful sorrow; for it is the fruit of sin: But her spirit is Received by Jesus Christ: and that must be our joy, if we will behave our selves as true Believers. If we can suffer with her, should we not rejoyce also with her? And if the joy be far greater to the Soul with Christ, than the ruined state of the body can be lamentable; it is but reason that our joy should be greater for her joy, than our sorrow for the dissolution of the flesh. We that should not much lament the passage of a friend beyond the Seas, if it were to be advanced to a Kingdom, should less lament the passage of a Soul to Christ, if it were not for the remnant of our woful unbelief.

She is arrived at the everlasting Rest, where the burden of corruption, the contradictions of the flesh, the molestations of the Tempter, the trou-

ble,

bles of the world, and the injuries of malicious men, are all kept out, and shall never more disturb her peace. She hath left us in these storms, who have more cause to weep for our selves and for our Children that have yet so much to do and suffer, and so many dangers to pass through, than for the Souls that are at Rest with Christ. We are capable of no higher hopes than to attain that state of blessedness which her Soul possesseth: And shall we make that the matter of our lamentation as to her, which we make the matter of our hopes as to our selves? Do we labour earnestly to come thither, and yet lament that she is there? You will say, It is not because she is cloathed upon with the house from Heaven, but that she is uncloathed of the flesh: But is there any other passage than Death unto immortality? Must we not be uncloathed, before the garments of Glory can be put on? She bemoaneth not her own dissolved Body: The glorified Soul can easily bear the corruption of the flesh: And if you saw but what the Soul enjoyeth, you would be like minded, and be moderate in your griefs. Love not your selves so as to be unjust and unmerciful in your desires to your friends! Let Satan desire to keep them out of Heaven, but do not you desire it. You may desire your own good, but not so as to deprive your friends of theirs; yea of a greater good, that you may have a lesser by it. And if it be their company that you desire, in reason you should be glad that they are

gone to dwell where you muſt dwell for ever, and therefore may for ever have their company: Had they ſtayed on earth, you would have had their company but a little while, becauſe you muſt make ſo ſhort a ſtay your ſelves. Let them therefore begin their journy before you, and grudge not that they are firſt at home, as long as you expect to find them there. In the mean time, he that called them from you, hath not left you comfortleſs: He is with you himſelf, who is better than a Mother, or than ten thouſand friends: When grief or negligence hindereth you from obſerving him, yet he is with you, and holdeth you up, and tenderly provideth for you: Though turbulent paſſions injuriouſly queſtion all his Love, and cauſe you to give him unmannerly and unthankful words; yet ſtill he beareth with you, and forgiveth all, and doth not forſake you for your peeviſhneſs and weakneſs, becauſe you are his Children, and he knoweth that you mean not to forſake him: Rebuke your paſſions, and calm your minds; Reclaim your thoughts, and caſt away the bitterneſs of ſuſpicious quarrelſome unbelief; and then you may perceive the preſence of your deareſt friend and Lord, who is enough for you, though you had no other friend. Without him all the friends on earth would be but ſilly comforters, and leave you as at the gates of Hell: Without him all the Angels and Saints in Heaven would never make it a Heaven to you. Grieve not too much that one of your Candles is put out, while you have

the Sun: Or if indeed it be not day with any of you, or the Sun be clouded or eclipsed, let that rather be the matter of your grief: Find out the cause, and presently submit, and seek reconciliation: Or if you are deprived of this Light, because you are yet asleep in sin, hearken to his call, and rub your eyes, *Eph.* 5. 14. *Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.* Rom. 13. 11, 12, 13, 14. *Knowing that it is now high time to awake out of sleep, our salvation being nearer than when we first believed: the night is far spent, the day of eternal light is even at hand: cast off therefore the works of darkness, and put on all the armour of light: walk honestly and decently as in the day.* And whatever you do, make sure of the friend that never dyeth, and never shall be separated from you, and when you die, will certainly Receive the souls which you commend unto him.

And here, though contrary to my custom, I shall make some more particular mention of our deceased friend, on several accounts. 1. In prosecution of this Use that now we are upon, that you may see in the evidences of her happiness, how little cause you have to indulge extraordinary grief on her account, and how much cause to moderate your sense of our loss with the sense of her felicity. 2. That you may have the benefit of her example for your imitation, especially her Children that are bound to observe the holy *actions* as well as *instructions* of a Mother. 3. For the honour of Christ, and his Grace, and his Servant: For as God hath

promised to honour those that honour him, 1 Sam. 2. 30. and Christ hath said, *If any man serve me, him will my Father honour*, John 12. 26. So I know Christ will not take it ill to be honoured in his members, and to have his Ministers subserve him in so excellent a work: It is a very considerable part of the love or hatred, honour or dishonour that Christ hath in the world, which he receiveth as he appeareth in his followers. He that will not see a cup of cold water given to one of them go unrewarded, and will tell those at the last day that did or did not visit and relieve them, that they did or did it not to him, will now expect it from me as my duty, to give him the honour of his Graces in his deceased servant, and I doubt not will accordingly accept it, when it is no other indeed than his own honour that is my End, and nothing but the words of Truth and Soberness shall be the means.

And here I shall make so great a transition as shall retain my discourse in the narrow compass of the Time in which she lived near me and under my care, and in my familiar acquaintance, omitting all the rest of her life, that none may say I speak but by hear-say of things which I am uncertain of: and I will confine it also to those special gifts and graces in which she was eminent, that I may not take you up with a description of a Christian as such, and tell you only of that good which she held but in common with all other Christians. And if any thing that I shall say were unknown to any Reader that knew her, let them know that it is because they knew her but distantly, imperfectly, or by re-

ports;

ports; and that my advantage of near acquaintance did give me a just assurance of what I say.

The Graces which I discerned to be eminent in her, were these. 1. She was eminent in her contempt of the Pride, and Pomp, and Pleasure, and Vanity of the World, and in her great averseness to all these. She had an honest impatiency of the life which is common among the rich and vain-glorious in the world: Voluptuousness and Sensuality, Excess of Drinking, Cards and Dice, she could not endure, what ever names of good house-keeping or seemly deportment they borrowed for a mask: In her Apparel she went below the garb of others of her rank; indeed in such plainness as did not notifie her degree: but yet in such a grave and decent habit, as notified her Sobriety and humility: She was a Stranger to Pastimes, and no Companion for Time-wasters, as knowing, that Persons so near eternity, that have so short a life and so great a work, have no time to spare. Accordingly in her latter dayes, she did (as those that grow wise by experience of the vanity of the world) retire from it, and cast it off before it cast off her: She betook her self to the society of a people that were low in the world, of humble, serious, upright lives, though such as had been wholly strangers to her: And among these poor inferiour strangers she lived in contentent and quietness; desiring rather to converse with those that would help her to redeem the time, in prayer and edifying conference, than with those that would grieve her by consuming it on their lusts.

2. She

2. She was very prudent in her converse and affairs (allowing for the passion of her sex and age), and so escaped much of the inconveniences that else in so great and manifold businesses would have overwhelmed her: As a good man will guide his affairs with discretion, *Psalm* 112. 5. so discretion will preserve him, and understanding will keep him, to deliver him from the way of the evil man, who leaveth the paths of uprightness to walk in the way of darkness, *Proverbs* 2. 11, 12, 13.

3. She was seriously Religious, without partiality, or any taint of siding or faction, or holding the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ in respect of persons: I never heard speak against men, or for men, as they differed in some small and tolerable things: She impartially heard any Minister that was able, and godly, and sound in the main, and could bear with the weaknesses of Ministers when they were faithful: Instead of owning the names or opinions of Prelatical, Presbyterian, Independent, or such like, she took up with the name and profession of a *Christian*, and loved a Christian as a Christian, without much respect to such different tolerable opinions. Instead of troubling her self with needless scruples, and making up a Religion of opinions and singularities, she studied Faith and Godliness, and lived upon the common certain truths, and well-known duties, which have been the old and beaten way, by which the universal Church of Christ hath gone to heaven in former Ages.

4. She was very impartial in her judgment about particular cases: being the same in judging of the case

of

of a child and a ſtranger: and no intereſt of children or other relations, could make her ſwerve from an equal judgment.

5. She very much preferred the ſpiritual welfare of her children before their temporal; looking on the former as the true felicity, and on the later without it, but as a pleaſant voluntary miſery.

6. Since I was acquainted with her, I alwayes found her very ready to good works, according to her power. And when ſhe hath ſeen a poor man come to me, that ſhe conjectured ſolicited me for relief, ſhe hath reprehended me for keeping the caſe to my ſelf, and not inviting her to contribute: And I could never deſcern that ſhe thought any thing ſo well beſtowed, as that which relieved the neceſſities of the poor that were honeſt and induſtrious.

7. She had the wonderful mercy of a man-like Chriſtian patient ſpirit, under all afflictions that did befal her, and under the multitude of troubleſome buſineſſes, that would have even diſtracted an impatient mind. Though ſudden anger was the ſin that ſhe much confeſt her ſelf, and therefore thought ſhe wanted patience, yet I have oft wondered to ſee her bear up with the ſame alacrity and quietneſs, when *Jobs* meſſengers have brought her the tidings that would have overwhelmed an impatient ſoul. When Law-ſuits and the great afflictions of her children have aſſaulted her like ſucceſſive Waves, which I feared would have born her into the deep, if not devoured all her peace; ſhe ſuſtained all, as if no great conſiderable change had been made againſt her,

her, having the same God, and the same Christ, and promises, and hope, from which she fetcht such real comfort and support, as shewed a real serious faith.

8. She was alwayes apt to put a good interpretation upon Gods providences; like a right Believer, that having the spirit of Adoption, perceiveth Fatherly love in all: She would not easily be perswaded that God meant her any harm: She was not apt to hearken to the enemy that accuseth God and his wayes to man, as he accuseth man and his actions to God: she was none of those that are suspicious of God, and are still concluding death and ruine from all that he doth to them, and are gathering wrath from misinterpreted expressions of his love: who weep because of the smoak, before they can be warmed by the fire. *Yet God is good to* Israel; *and it shall go well with them that fear before him.* (*Psa.* 73. 1. *Eccles.* 8. 12, 13.) were her conclusions from the sharpest providences: She expected the morning in the darkest night: and judged not of the end by the beginning; but was alwayes confident, if she could but entitle God in the case, that the issue would be good. She was not a murmurer against God, nor one that contended with her Maker; nor one that created calamity to her self by a self-troubling unquiet mind: She patiently bore what God laid upon her, and made it not heavier by the additions of uncomfortable prognosticks, and misgiving or repining thoughts. She had a great confidence in God, that he was doing good to her and here in all; and where at present she saw any matter of

grief

grief, she much supported her soul with a belief that God would remove and overcome it in due time.

9. She was not troubled (that ever I discerned) with doubtings about her interest in Christ, and about her own Justification and Salvation: but whether she reached to assurance or not, she had confident apprehensions of the Love of God, and quietly reposed her soul upon his grace. Yet not secure through presumption or self esteem; but comforting her self in the Lord her God: By this means she spent those hours in a chearful performance of her duty, which many spend in fruitless self-vexation for the failings of their duty, or in meer enquiries, Whether they have Grace or not? and others spend in wrangling perplexed Controversies about the manner or circumstances of duty: And I believe that she had more comfort from God by way of reward upon her sincere obedience, while she referred her soul to him, and rested on him, than many have that more anxiously perplexed themselves about the discerning of their holiness, when they should be studying to be more holy, that it might discover it self. And by this means she was fit for praises and thanksgiving, and spent not her life in lamentations and complaints: and made not Religion seem terrible to the ignorant, that judge of it by the faces and carriage of professors: She did not represent it to the world, as a morose and melancholy temper; but as the rational creatures chearful obedience to his maker, actuated by the sense of the wonderful Love that is manifested

in the Redeemer, and by the hopes of the purchased and promised felicity in the blessed sight and fruition of God. And I conjecture that her forementioned disposition to think well of God and of his providences, together with her long and manifold experience; (the great advantage of antient tryed Christians) did much conduce to free her from doubtings and disquieting fears, about her own sincerity and Salvation. And I confess, if her life had not been answerable to her peace and confidence, I should not have thought the better, but the worse of her condition; nothing being more lamentable than to make hast to Hell, through a wilful confidence that the danger is past, and that they are in the way to Heaven as well as the most sanctified.

10. Lastly, I esteemed it the height of her attainment, that she never discovered any inordinate fears of death; but a chearful readiness, willingness and desire, to be dissolved and be with Christ. This was her constant temper both in health and sickness, as far as I was able to observe: She would be frequently expressing how little reason she had to be desirous of longer life, and how much reason to be willing to depart. Divers times in dangerous sicknesses I have been with her, and never discerned any considerable averseness, dejectedness or fear. Many a time I have thought how great a mercy I should esteem it, if I had attained that measure of fearless willingness to lay down this flesh, as she had attained. Many a one that can make light of wants, or threats,

or

or ſcorns, or any ordinary troubles, cannot ſubmit ſo quietly and willingly to death: Many a one that can go through the labours of Religion, and contemn oppoſition, and eaſily give all they have to the poor, and bear impriſonments, baniſhment or contempt, can never overcome the fears of Death: ſo far even the Father of lies ſpake truth, *Joh.* 2. 4. *Skin for Skin: yea all that a man hath will he give for his Life.* I took it therefore for a high attainment, and extraordinary mercy to our deceaſed friend, that the *King of Terrours* was not terrible to her: Though I doubt not but ſomewhat of averſneſs and fear is ſo radicated in natures ſelf-preſerving principle, as that it is almoſt inſeparable; yet in her I never diſcerned any troubleſome appearances of it. When I firſt came to her in the beginning of her laſt ſickneſs, ſhe ſuddenly paſſed the ſentence of death upon her ſelf, without any ſhew of fear or trouble; when to us the diſeaſe appeared not to be great: But when the diſeaſe encreaſed, her pains were ſo little, and the effect of the Fever was ſo much in her head, that after this ſhe ſeemed not to eſteem it mortal, being not ſenſible of her caſe and danger: And ſo as ſhe lived without the fears of death, ſhe ſeemed to us to die without them: God by the nature of her diſeaſe removing death as out of her ſight, when ſhe came to that weakneſs, in which elſe the encounter was like to have been ſharper than ever it was before. And thus in one of the weaker ſex, God hath ſhewed us that it is poſſible to

live

live in holy confidence, and peace, and quietneſs of mind, without diſtreſſing griefs or fears, even in the midſt of a troubleſom world, and of vexatious buſineſſes, and with the afflictions of her deareſt Relations almoſt continually before her: And that our quiet or diſquiet, our peace or trouble dependeth more upon our inward ſtrength and temper, then upon our outward ſtate, occaſions, or provocations: And that it is more in our hands, than of any or all our friends and enemies, whether we ſhall have a comfortable, or uncomfortable life.

What remaineth now, but that all we that ſurvive, eſpecially you that are her Children, do follow her as ſhe followed Chriſt? Though the Word of God be your ſufficient Rule; and the Example of Chriſt be your perfect pattern; yet as the *Inſtructions*, ſo the *Example* of a parent muſt be a weighty motive, to quicken and engage you to your duty; and will elſe be a great aggravation of your ſin: A holy Child of unholy parents, doth no more than his neceſſary duty; becauſe whatever parents are, he hath an holy God: But an unholy Child of holy parents, is unexcuſable in ſin, and deplorably miſerable; as forſaking the Doctrine and pattern both of their Creator and their Progenitors, whom Nature engageth them to obſerve: And it will be an aggravation of their deſerved miſery, to have their Parents witneſs againſt them, that they taught them, and they would not learn, and went before them in a holy life, but they would not follow

low them, *Prov.* 1. 8. *My Son hear the instruction of thy Father, and forsake not the Law of thy Mother; for they shall be an Ornament of Grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.* Read and consider *Prov.* 30. 17. and 15. 20. and 23. 22, 25. Sins against Parents have a special curse affixed to them in this life (as the case of *Cham* sheweth): And the due observance and honouring of Parents hath a special Promise of Temporal Blessings, as the fifth Commandment sheweth, *Ephes.* 6. 1, 2, 3. *Children obey your Parents in the Lord for it is right: Honour thy Father and Mother, (which is the first Commandment with promise) that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.*] The Histories of all Ages are so full of the instances of Gods judgements in this life upon five sorts of sinners, as may do much to convince an Atheist of the Government and special Providence of God; that is upon *Persecutors*, *Murderers*, *Sacrilegious*, *False-witnesses* (especially by *Perjury*) and *Abusers and Dishonourers of Parents.* And the great *Honour* that is due to *Parents* when they are *dead*, is to give just honour to their *Names*, and to obey their Precepts, and *imitate* their good examples: It is the high commendation of the Rechabites, that they strictly kept the precepts of their Father, even in a thing indifferent, a mode of living; not to drink wine, or build houses, but dwell in tents: and God annexeth this notable blessing, [*Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, because ye have obeyed the commandement of* Jonadab *your Father, and kept all his Precepts, and done according*

ding to all that he hath commanded you, Therefore thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, Jonadab the Son of Rechab *shall not want to stand before me for ever.*] *Jer.* 36. 6, 7. 18. 19. But especially in the great duties of Religion, where Parents do but deliver the mind of God, and use their authority to procure obedience to Divine authority; and where the matter it self is necessary to our Salvation, the obligation to *obedience* and *imitation* is most indispensable; and disobedience is an aggravated iniquity, and the notorious brand of infelicity, and Prognostick of ensuing woe: The ungodly Children of godly Parents being the most deplorable, unhappy, unexcusable persons in the World, (if they hold on.)

There is yet another Doctrine, that I should speak to.

Doct. 7.

Prayer in general, and this prayer in particular, that Christ will Receive our departing souls, is a most suitable conclusion of all the action of a Christians life.

Prayer is the breath of a Christians life: it is his work and highest converse, and therefore fittest to be the concluding action of his life; that it may reach the end at which he aimed. We have need of Prayer all our lives, because we have need of God, and need of his manifold and continued Grace: But in our last extremity we have

a *special* need: Though Death is apt to seize upon us, while prosperity hindreth the sense of our necessities, and health perswadeth us that Time is not near its journies end; yet it is high time to pray with doubled fervour and importunity, when we see that we are near our last: when we find that we have no more time to pray, but must now speak our last for our immortal Souls, and must at once say all that we have to say, and shall never have a hearing more; O then to be *unable* to pray, or to be *faithless*, and *heartless*, and *hopeless* in our prayers, would be a calamity beyond expression.

Yet I know (for ordinary observation tells it us) that many truly gracious persons may *accidentally* be *indisposed* and *disabled* to pray, when they are near to death: If the *Disease* be such as doth disturb the Brain, or take them up with violence of pain, as overwhelm the mind by perturbation of the passions, or abuse the imagination, or notably waste and debilitate the spirits; it cannot be expected that a body thus disabled should serve the Soul, in this or any other duty. But still the *praying Habit* doth remain, though a distempered body do forbid the exercise: The *Habitual graces* of the Soul are there as in those that are the soul of Prayer.

But this should move us, to pray while we have time, and while our Bodies have strength, and our spirits have vigour and alacrity to serve us, seeing we are so uncertain of bodily disposition and capacity, for the use of it. O pray, and pray with all your hearts, before any Fever or Delirium

overthrow your understandings or your memories; before your thoughts are all commanded to attend your pains; and before your decayed spirits fail you, and deny their necessary service to your suits; and before the apprehensions of your speedy approach to the presence of the most Holy God, and your entrance upon an endless state, do amaze, confound and overwhelm your Souls with fear and perturbation. O Christians, what folly, what sin and shame is it to us, that now while we have time to pray, and leave to pray, and helps to pray, and have no such disturbing hindrances, we should yet want hearts; and have no mind, no life and fervour for so great a work! O pray now, lest you are unable to pray then: And if you are then hindred but by such bodily undisposedness, God will understand your habitual desires, and your groans, and take it as if you had actually prayed; Pray now, that so you may be acquainted with the God that then you must fly unto for mercy, and may not be strangers to him or unto Prayer; and that he may not find then that your prayers are but the expressions of your fears, and not of your Love, and are constrained and not voluntary motions unto God: Pray now in preparation to your dying prayers. O what a terrible thing it is to be to learn to pray in that hour of extremity; and to have then no principle to pray by but natural self-love which every Thief hath at the gallows! To be then without the Spirit of prayer,

when without it there cannot an acceptable word or groan be uttered, and when the rejection of our suits and person, will be the prologue to the final judicial rejection, and will be a distress so grievous as presumptuous Souls will not believe, till sad experience become their Tutor: Can you imagine that you shall then at last, be taught the art of *acceptable Prayer*, meerly by horrour, and the natural sense of pain and danger, as Sea-men in a storm, or a Malefactor by the rack, when in your health and leasure you will not be perswaded to the daily use of serious Prayer, but number your selves with the families that are under the wrath of the Almighty, being such *as call not on his name*, *Jer.* 10. 25. *Psalm* 79. 6.

Indeed there are many prayers must go before, or else this Prayer [*Lord Jesus receive my spirit*] will be in vain, when you would be loth to find it so. You must first pray for renewing Sanctifying grace, for the death of sin, and the Pardon of sin, for a holy life and a Heavenly mind, for obedience, patience and perseverance; and if you obtain not these, there is no hope that *Jesus Christ* should *receive your Spirits*, that never received his sanctifying spirit.

How sad is it to observe that those that have most need of Prayer, have least mind to Pray, as being least sensible of their needs? Yea, that those that are the next step to the state of Devils, and have as much need of Prayer as any miserable souls on earth, do yet deride it, and hate those that seriously and fervently perform it: a man of

 Prayer

overthrow your understandings or your memories; before your thoughts are all commanded to attend your pains; and before your decayed spirits fail you, and deny their necessary service to your suits; and before the apprehensions of your speedy approach to the presence of the most Holy God, and your entrance upon an endless state, do amaze, confound and overwhelm your Souls with fear and perturbation. O Christians, what folly, what sin and shame is it to us, that now while we have time to pray, and leave to pray, and helps to pray, and have no such disturbing hindrances, we should yet want hearts; and have no mind, no life and fervour for so great a work! O pray now, lest you are unable to pray then; And if you are then hindred but by such bodily undispositedness, God will understand your habitual desires, and your groans, and take it as if you had actually prayed; Pray now, that so you may be acquainted with the God that then you must fly unto for mercy, and may not be strangers to him or unto Prayer; and that he may not find then that your prayers are but the expressions of your fears, and not of your love, and are constrained and not voluntary motions unto God: Pray now in preparation to your dying prayers. O what a terrible thing it is to be to learn to pray in that hour of extremity, and to have then no principle to pray by, but natural self-love which every Thief doth at the gallows! To be then without the gift of prayer,

when without it there cannot an acceptable word or groan be uttered, and when the rejection of our suits and person, will be the prologue to the final judicial rejection, and will be a distress so grievous as presumptuous Souls will not believe, till sad experience become their Tutor: Can you imagine that you shall then at last, be taught the art of *acceptable Prayer*, meerly by horrour, and the natural sense of pain and danger, as Sea-men in a storm, or a Malefactor by the rack, when in your health and leasure you will not be perswaded to the daily use of serious Prayer, but number your selves with the families that are under the wrath of the Almighty, being such *as call not on his name*, *Jer.* 10. 25. *Psalm* 79. 6.

Indeed there are many prayers must go before, or else this Prayer [*Lord Jesus receive my spirit*] will be in vain, when you would be loth to find it so. You must first pray for renewing Sanctifying grace, for the death of sin, and the Pardon of sin, for a holy life and a Heavenly mind, for obedience, patience and perseverance; and if you obtain not these, there is no hope that *Jesus Christ* should *receive your Spirits*, that never received his sanctifying spirit.

How sad is it to observe that those that have most need of Prayer, have least mind to Pray, as being least sensible of their needs? Yea, that those that are the next step to the state of Devils, and have as much need of Prayer as any miserable souls on earth, do yet deride it, and hate those that seriously and fervently perform it: a man of

 Prayer

prayer being the most common object of their malicious reproach and scorn! O miserable Cainites, that hate their brethren for offering more acceptable sacrifice then their own! little do they know how much of the very Satanical nature is in that malice, and in those reproachful scorns! and little do they know how near they are to the curse and desparation of *Cain*, and with what horrour they shall cry out, [*My punishment is greater then I can bear*] *Gen.* 4. 11, 13. If God and Good men condemn you for your lip-service, and heartless devotions, and ungodly lives; will you therefore hate the holy nature and better lives of those that judge you, when you should hate your own ungodliness and hypocrisie? Hear what God said to the leader of *your sect*, Gen. 4. 6. *Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance falu? If thou do well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou dost not well, sin lyeth at the door.*] Have you not as much need to pray, as those that you hate and reproach for praying? Have you not as much need to be oft and earnest in prayer as they? Must Christ himself spend *whole nights* in prayer, *Luke* 6. 12. and shall an ignorant sensual hardened sinner think he hath *no need* of it, though he be unconverted, unjustified, unready to die, and almost past the opportunity of praying? O miserable men, that shortly would *cry and roar* in the anguish of their *Souls*, and yet will not pray while there is time and room for prayer! Their judge is willing now to hear them, and now they have

have nothing but hypocritical [illegible] speak? Praying is now a wearisom, tedious and unpleasant thing to them, that shortly would be glad if the most heart-tearing lamentations could prevail for the crums and drops of that mercy which they thus despise, *Luke* 16. 24. Of all men in the world, it ill becomes one in so deep necessities and dangers to be prayerless.

But for you Christians, that are daily exercised in this holy converse with your Maker, hold on, and grow not strange to heaven, and let not your holy desires be extinguished for want of excitation: Prayer is your ascent to heaven; your departure from a vexatious world, to treat with God for your Salvation: your retirement from a World of dangers into the impregnable fortress where you are safe; and from vanity unto felicity; and from troubles unto Rest: Which though you cannot come so near, nor enjoy so fully and delightfully as hereafter you shall do, yet *thus* do you make your *approaches* to it, and *thus* do you secure your future full fruition of it. And let them all scoff at *hearty fervent Prayer* as long as they will, yet *Prayer* shall do that with God *for you*, which health, and wealth, and dignity, and honor, and carnal pleasures, and all the World shall never do for one of them. And though they neglect and vilifie it now, yet the hour is near, when they will be fain to scamble and bungle at it themselves; and the face of death will better teach them the use of prayer, than our doctrine and exhortation now can do. A departing soul will not easily be prayer-

less

less; nor easily be content with sleepy prayers. But alas! it is not every Prayer that hath *saw sevency* from the power of fear, that shall succeed: Many a thousand may perish for ever that have prayed [*Lord Jesus receive my Spirit*] But the Soul that breatheth after Christ, and is weary of sinning, and hath long been pressing toward the mark, may receive incouragement for his last petitions, from the bent and success of all the foregoing prayers of his life. Believe it Christians, you cannot be so ready to beg of Christ to Receive your souls, as he is ready and willing to receive them. As you *came praying* therefore into the *world of Grace, go praying out* of it into the *world of Glory*. It is not a work that you were never used to (though you have had lamented backwarness, and coldness, and omissions): It is not to a God that you were never with before: As you know whom you have believed, so you may know to whom you pray: It is indeed a most important suit to beg for the *Receiving of a departing soul*: but it is put up *to him* to whom it *properly* doth *belong*; and *to him* that hath encouraged you by answering many a former prayer with that mercy which was the earnest of this; and it is to him that loveth souls much better than any soul can love it self. O live in prayer, and die in prayer! And do not as the graceless witless world, despise prayer while they live, and then think a *Lord have mercy on me*, shall prove enough to cast them into heaven; Mark their Statutes and monuments in the Churches, whether they be not made kneeling and lifting up the hands

to tell you that all will be forced to *pray*, or to *approve of prayer* at their *death*, whatever they ſay againſt it in their life. O pray and wait but a little longer, and all your danger will be paſt, and you are ſafe for ever! Keep up your hands a little longer, till you ſhall end your conflict with the laſt enemy, and ſhall paſs from *Prayer* to *everlaſting Praiſe*.

FINIS.